Research Expanding Current Understandings of Bullying in Sweden[1]

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Abstract

This paper discusses the on-going research on the phenomenon of bullying in the Department of Child and Youth Studies at Stockholm University. The paper describes the reasons, and how to contribute with an understanding of bullying as a social group phenomenon, and specifically focuses on inductive ethnographic and cyberethnographic approaches toward peer-to-peer interactions in schools, preschools and on the Internet. The understanding of this phenomenon is based on a Swedish interdisciplinary approach which includes children's perspectives. The objective is to explore bullying as a complex social group phenomenon which allows for a focus on the process of bullying, thus creating an opportunity for the enhancement of the understanding of inter- and intra-connected actions and perspectives. This article is intended to contribute to a discussion on a broadening of the conceptualization of the phenomenon of bullying.

Keywords. Bullying, social group phenomenon, schools, preschools, the Internet.

Investigación para ampliar el entendimiento del matoneo en Suecia

Resumen

Este documento plantea la investigación permanente sobre el fenómeno de matoneo en el Departamento de Estudios de Niñez y Juventud de la Universidad de Estocolmo. El documento describe las razones, y cómo contribuir con el entendimiento del matoneo como un fenómeno de un grupo social, y específicamente se enfoca en el empleo de etnografía inductiva y ciber-etnografía hacia las interacciones entre pares en los colegios, preescolar y en Internet. La comprensión de este fenómeno se basa en un enfoque interdisciplinario sueco que incluye las perspectivas de los niños. El objetivo es explorar el matoneo como un fenómeno de grupo social complejo, que permite un enfoque en el proceso de matoneo, y por tanto creando una oportunidad de ampliar el entendimiento de acciones y perspectivas inter e intra- conectadas. La intensión de este artículo es contribuir a la discusión de ampliar la conceptualización del fenómeno del bullying.

Palabras clave. Matoneo, fenómeno de grupo social, colegios, preescolar, Internet.

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Pesquisa sobre a expansão do conhecimento atual do bullying na Suécia

Resumo

Este artigo discute a pesquisa em curso sobre o fenômeno do bullying no Departamento de Estudos da Criança e da Juventude na Universidade de Estocolmo. O documento descreve as razões, e como contribuir com a compreensão do bullying como um fenômeno social de grupo e, especificamente, enfoca-se em abordagens etnográficas e cyber-etnográficas indutivas sobre interações entre pares em escolas, pré-escolas e internet. A compreensão deste fenômeno está baseado numa abordagem interdisciplinar sueca que inclui a perspectiva das crianças. O objetivo é explorar o bullying como um fenômeno social complexo de grupo que permite enfocar o processo de bullying criando, assim, uma oportunidade para melhorar o conhecimento das ações e perspectivas inter e intra-conectadas. Este artigo tem a intenção de contribuir para uma discussão sobre a ampliação da conceptualização do bullying.

Palavras-chave. Bullying, fenômeno social de grupo, escolas, pré-escolas, internet.

Introduction

Increasingly, bullying and the effects of bullying behaviours have gained awareness as a critical issue. Governments, policy makers and researchers have progressively highlighted this phenomenon as an important concern that requires effective action. The effects and prevention of bullying are well documented and discussed in several contexts including media, education/schooling, research and parental/family spheres. Despite the widespread knowledge and acknowledgement of these behaviours, bullying behaviours and their devastating results continue to persist.

In this paper we describe how we are going to contribute with an understanding of bullying as a social group phenomenon in three settings: schools, preschools and on the Internet. We base our understanding on a Swedish interdisciplinary approach including children's perspectives. Through our various data sets, our purpose is to explore bullying as a complex social group phenomenon. Such an approach would allow for a focus on the process of bullying, thus creating opportunity for the enhancement of understanding inter- and intra-connected actions and perspectives (Søndergaard, 2012). Our contribution is specifically focused on inductive, ethnographic and cyberethnographic approaches toward peer-to-peer interactions in schools, preschools and on the Internet. These projects are further described below.

Bullying in Preschools and Schools in the Swedish Context

In Sweden, bullying in preschools and schools has attracted the concern and interest of government, policy makers and researchers for some time. Children's rights have been championed early in comparison with those of the rest of the world, beginning as early as 1979 through the criminalization of physical punishment (disciplining) of children in 1989, ratifying and exemplifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and in 1993 appointing an Ombudsman specifically to represent, speak and protect the rights of children in Sweden. In 2006 the government also established the Child and Student Ombudsman (BEO) as part of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate, which is a separate entity from the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden (Barnombudsmannen). BEO is an authority that monitors the Education Act (Chapter 6) on bullying behaviour at school and preschools. Parents and children can notify to the BEO, if they have experienced bullying at schools and preschools. The BEO investigates each case and the schools and preschools notified must respond to the notification. Finally, after the investigation is carried out, the BEO can award damages to the affected party, if it is found that the schools and preschools have failed to comply with the rules of how to protect children from bullying. Furthermore, Sweden has specifically addressed

the growing awareness and severity surrounding bullying with an anti-bullying law enacted in 2006, which allowed for clearer guidelines for responding to, reporting and interventions (Swedish Institute, 2012; SFS, 2006:67). This reinforces the Swedish Education Act, legislated in 1985 and amended 2010 (SFS 2010:800), which charges teachers with "actively counteract[ing] all types of insulting treatment such as bullying or racist behaviour" (The National Swedish Agency for Education; Skolverket, 2009b).

According to Swedish Law (Chapter 14a), all preschools and schools have the responsibility to prevent the exposure of children to bullying. The implications of this law is that, when teaching staff learn that children have been subjected to bullying behaviour, they are expected to investigate and to work toward a solution to prevent bullying practices happening again. Preschools and schools also are expected to develop general policy plans to respond to bullying and insulting behaviour. However, as described above, the National Swedish Agency for Education research report found that treatment programs used in selected schools in Sweden were not as effective as expected. The report concluded that there is a need to understand bullying as a complex problem, and that treatment should not to be focused on one single method of prevention. Instead, the report recommended that each bullying case should be dealt with on an individual basis, at times combining methods that take into account the specific elements related to the incident. The report also recommended that schools should work systematically with school routines and treatment, where all staff members are engaged and all children are involved in planning programs and in activities designed to accomplish good relationships (The National Swedish Agency for Education – Skolverket, 2011a).

In 2003**,** the National Swedish Agency for Education (Skolverket) included different forms of insulting behaviour in their definition of bullying on the basis of sex, ethnicity and socio-economic background. This list was later increased to include, gender identity (or expression of gender), ethnic background, religion and other faith/beliefs, disabilities, sexual nature and age (Frånberg & Wrethander, 2011). In the current curriculum, the word "bullying" itself has been removed. The Swedish National Agency for Education has commissioned several publications surrounding the concept of "bullying" (see for example The National Swedish Agency for Education; Skolverket, 2011 a 2011b). However, rather than stating the word outright or defining the concept of "bullying", The Swedish National Agency for Education focuses on "bullying" behaviours specifically: discrimination, harassment and other abusive or offensive behaviours (The Swedish National Agency for Education; Skolverket, 2009a; 2009b; 2009c). Frånberg and Wrethander point out that the "Begreppen diskriminering, trakasserier, (annan) kränkande behandling och mobbning florerar och det är svårt att definiera vad de egentligen star för, vilket som är överordnat och underordnat varandra och framför allt hur de ska definieras och hanteras i skolans praktiska vardag. [Concepts of discrimination, harassment, (other) abusive behaviour and bullying are prevalent, and it is difficult to define what they really stand for, which is the superior and the subordinate to the other and especially how they are defined and managed in the school's every day practices]." (citation translated by authors, 2011, p. 91).

Understandings of Bullying and Cyberbullying

Historically, the definition of bullying was based on the relationships between individual victims and bullies, for example that bullying has its cause in aggressive behaviour, where the aggressor physically or verbally threatens or harms the "victim", and the aggressive behaviour is repeated and intentional (Olweus, 1993; Smith & Sharp, 1994). This approach posits that there is a tendency for the bullying child to be physically stronger as well as more aggressive, possessing a high level of manipulation and a low degree of empathy (Fairley, 1999; Olweus, 1993). This explanation implies that the bullying child and the exposed child have *asymmetrical power relations*. A more interactive perspective is that bullying can be seen as a *social-cultural phenomenon*, where social groups have different prerequisites for exercising power. This approach focuses on differences between groups in relation to gender, ethnicity, and social class (Smith & Sharp, 1994). A related perspective views bullying as a *social group phenomenon*, for example in schools, which means that bullying involves several participant positions, where group processes produce inclusion and exclusion of children (Salmivalli, Kaukianien, Voeten, & Sinisammal, 2004; Schott, 2014). This implies an

enlarged perspective, from a bully-victim dyad, or bully-victim-bystander perspective, to a view of bullying as a social phenomenon where positions can shift depending on situation and context (Schott & Søndergaard, 2014). Based on the understanding of bullying as a group phenomenon, it can also be seen as a response to peer-pressure at school. In this regard bullying is understood from a social contextual perspective where the perpetrator asserts interpersonal power through aggression. Here, the existing behaviour and attitudes in the environment surrounding the child/children are assessed based on the belief that those aspects are decisive for the occurrence of bullying behaviour (Pepler & Craig, 1995; Pepler, Craig, Connolly, Yuile, McMaster, & Jiang 2006).

As previously described, bullying is often seen as a subcategory of aggressive behavior, and there has been some controversy in discourses surrounding younger children and the categorisation of "bullying." Some have argued the "trend" to label children as "bullies" or "victims" is too harsh and point to the difficulties in differentiating between bullying behaviours and "normative development trends" of expressing aggression (Kirves & Sajaniemi, 2012, p. 385-386). This poses the question of whether or not bullying behaviours could be excused as a developmental stage or issue. However, this discourse surrounding "normative development trends" is contradicted by Vygotsky and Piaget, in their developmental analysis of children. Commonly accepted and utilized within educational contexts, Vygotsky and Piaget recognize that children by the age of four are able to comprehend their own actions and begin to understand others as separate from themselves (Von Tetzchner, 2005).

In Sweden, the definition of bullying has changed over time (Frånberg & Wrethander, 2011). Initially Heinemann (1972) introduced the phenomenon through the word mobbing, and his contribution resulted in intense debates surrounding how to understand exclusionary behaviour between peers in schools. Heinemann focused on mobbing as a group phenomenon, but when Olweus in the 1970s presented his results from research into aggression between boys, the definition of bullying changed toward an understanding of the issue as an individual personality problem (Olweus, 1973, 1978, 1993). The Swedish curriculum (Läroplan) initially included the concept of bullying in 1980 following the Olweus tradition. In the 1990s, the

focus was shifted toward examining bullying from the perspective of power relations, social roles played by participants/observers of bullying (such as the observer, the popular child, or the assistant) (Björk, 1995; Fors, 1993; Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, 1996). In the 1990s several organizations, including the National School Board recognised the need for prevention and "treatment" of bullying, as it was an increasingly recognised problem within all Swedish schools. Olweus' connection to aggression is still a prevalent definition, albeit the concept of bullying has been changing and the assumption of the powerful bully and the submissive, passive victim has been challenged.

The attempt at defining bullying that takes place online, known as cyberbullying, has been a project largely devoted to the differentiating and finding of similarities between cyberbullying and "traditional bullying" or "offline bullying" (Canty, Stubbe, Steers, & Collings, 2014; Cassidy et al., 2013; Slonje, Smith, & Frisén, 2013). The point of departure for this epistemological project has been the work of Olweus (1993). Slonje et al., (2013) therefore apply this when defining cyberbullying as: "a systematic abuse of power which occurs through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs)" (p. 26). Even so, such a definition seems to be widely accepted as an extension of the logic of defining traditional bullying, to the context of cyberbullying. However, two main criteria of traditional bullying are still problematic when applying to the digital domain, these are "repetition and power imbalance" (Slonje et al., 2013). These criteria are not directly applicable in an online context, as the conditions for social interaction are very different from face-to-face interactions. Harmful acts can be repeated through the sharing and accessing of information by a multitude of known and unknown users, obscuring the intent of the original act and multiplying its effect. Power imbalances that exist between peers may not extend to the internet. Anonymity and physical distance provides users with extended opportunities for empowering interaction as well as perpetration of harmful acts, and thus 'power imbalances' can occur in a multitude of ways that do not clearly apply to those theories developed for face-to-face interaction.

Through a thorough overview of the instruments used to measure cyberbullying, Berne et al., (2013) concluded that the word 'cyberbullying' is used in

"almost half of the instruments" studied. Even though the word may not be used directly, researchers still measure 'cyberbullying' based on a common understanding of the term. The term can therefore be considered 'representative of the field' in general (Berne et al., 2013). Reviewing the increasing body of research within the field, it is clear that a consensus has not yet been reached on the specific criteria of what constitutes cyberbullying. However, the research community is working toward a common understanding, all somehow positioning themselves in relation to Olweus' three-pronged approach to bullying in offline interaction. Even so, there are opposing voices within the field that are critical towards the project of defining cyberbullying, especially in relation to Olweus' bullying definition. The critique largely lies in the implications such an *a priori* definition may have on the research outcome (Canty et al., 2014; Law Shapka, Hymel, Olson, & Waterhouse, 2012). The critique proposed by for example Canty et al. (2014), highlights how a traditionally inspired pre-definition of bullying, is problematic in an online setting, as it may inhibit the researcher in capturing the scope of the issue within online environments, to which the traditional definition is theoretically mal-adapted and therefore risks obscuring the social practices that are really the focus of the research. This, they argue, is particularly evident in quantitative studies of cyberbullying, which make up the vast majority of cyberbullying research, where measurements have been drawn from tools developed on behavioural definitions developed for studies of bullying in offline settings. Therefore, they may serve to produce findings that are essentially lacking in their understanding of the very behaviour that they intend to understand. It is clear that research on bullying in online settings has not yet managed to embrace or apply developments within the broader field of bullying research, where focus has largely shifted toward an understanding of bullying as a social group phenomenon. In order to develop how bullying behavior can be understood in online settings, inductive research approaches to online interaction can contribute to a more adapted and dynamic understanding of bullying behavior in a digitalized world.

The varying understandings of bullying and cyberbullying should be considered in relation to the perspectives from which they emanate. These perspectives do not exclude each other but are based on various theories on how to understand bullying and can be seen as complementary. However,

researchers have questioned predetermined perspectives on how to understand bullying, as research building on narrow theoretical assumptions can result in a limited understanding of the phenomenon (Terry, 1998). That is why it is important to further develop the knowledge encompassing our understanding of bullying as well as cyberbullying. The development of new knowledge should establish a locally and contextually relevant, as well as empirically informed, analytical perspective of the phenomenon. As perspectives, concepts and understandings surrounding bullying behaviours are cultivated, the possibility for discussion of a more complex definition of the phenomenon is opened, for example an understanding of bullying through interactive relationships and social order (Cederborg, 2014; Evaldsson, 2005; Goodwin, 1990, 2002, 2006; Kyratzis, 2004).

Prevention Programs

The current belief structures and definitions of bullying have influenced how prevention programs are constructed. The different methods used are based on theories that can overlap each other, illuminating the various beliefs surrounding the reasons for bullying (Granström, 2007). This means that programs *can be* entirely focused on individuals rather than, for instance, on social dynamics between peers. In addition, evaluations of prevention programs may rest on quantitative measurements that are related to theories of how to understand bullying, and are dependent on teachers' capacities to adopt and implement strategies. If evaluations of prevention programs have an exclusively quantitative approach there is a risk that the complexity of bullying is not fully captured (Cross & Barnes, 2014). As previously mentioned, it has been shown, through a large-scale national study in Sweden, that methods used in schools to prevent bullying have not reached their expected goals (The National Swedish Agency for Education; Skolverket, 2011b). It is problematic that there is a lack of generalized implementation of effective methods for preventing bullying, since the impact of bullying, irrespective of age and backgrounds has been proven to have negative consequences for those who are exposed (Besag, 1989; Tattum & Lane, 1989). However there are promising programs, for example, the KiVa program which has been implemented in 90% of Finnish schools. This program emphasizes that

there is a need for contextualization and adaptation for the various age groups when developing anti-bullying programs. The program attempts to include teachers, students and parents, utilizing a variety of methods such as printed materials, manuals, videos, online games and physical activities. After five years of implementation, their in-depth and rigorous review revealed that bullying had indeed decreased dramatically (www.kivaprogram.net/program).

Previous Research on Bullying in Schools and Preschools

Regardless of the large variety of actions in place to prevent and address bullying issues, there remains a large percentage of children in Sweden who are faced with bullying behaviours on a daily basis. According to the latest report from Friends, an organization against bullying, violations between students in schools are frequent. They found that, one in five secondary school children report experiences of harassment in school during the past year. It was found in the 2015 Friends Report that 60'000 children have been exposed to some form of bullying in Sweden in the past year**,** while 20% reported being harassed by a fellow student in the last year (Friends, 2015). Moreover, girls are more often exposed to degrading treatment than boys, and the violations against girls are often linked to sexual harassment (Friends, 2014). Thirteen percent of girls in the senior levels of compulsory school (years 7-9) reported being exposed to sexual harassment comparatively to 8% of boys (Friends, 2015). Alarmingly, despite this high ratio a large majority of bullied children suffer in silence (BRIS, 2012). They can be ashamed of being bullied and assume blame for what is happening to them. Children have also described how the bullying continuously lowers their self-confidence, and the question "what am I doing wrong?" comes back again and again (Berg, 2012). Moreover, in the latest Friends Report (2015), it was found that one third of the students believed teachers were not acting or responding to the accusations of bullying. While 10% actually reported being bullied/harassed by an adult, which could account for a portion of the non-reported incidents.

These reports from children are in line with research stating that the impact of bullying can have severe negative consequences, ranging from a decrease in self-confidence, depression, anxiety, loneliness, lower academic achievement, and to higher tendency of suicidal thoughts and attempts (c.f. Carlerby, Viitasara, Knutsson, & Gådin 2013; Elliot & Kilpatrick, 1994; Wolke, Copeland, Angold, & Costello, 2013). The severity of the impact can vary (Smith & Thomson, 1991). It is more common for short-term problems to occur, including depression, anxiety, loneliness and difficulties with schoolwork. Long-term problems are more associated with low self-esteem and depression including suicidal ideation (Limber, 2002; Lipman, 2003). In addition, teachers have expressed difficulties seeing or understanding when bullying occurs, especially when the behaviour is not physically aggressive, when there is indirect bullying, or where the teacher has not been present when behaviour occurs (Danby et al., 2011). Moreover, students may not report bullying to teachers (Rigby & Slee, 1993), which may be due to their belief that teachers are not able to help them (Besag, 1989).

The majority of research in bullying has focused on children in elementary (compulsory) and high school. Very few studies have focused on preschool and preschool classes (Ages 1-6), and fewer still have examined the variable of various language and cultural background within these contexts. Crick, Casas and Mosher (1997) found that children in early childhood do engage in relational aggressive acts in a more direct and reactive manner than older/more mature children, finding that children as young as three years old demonstrated bullying behaviours despite the lack of research of this age group. Additionally, opposed to older children's configurations and contrary to the previous participant bullying "categories" often discussed, younger children disclosed bullying behaviours to be mainly occurring between two individuals; the bully and the victim (Gillies-Rezo & Bosacki, 2003). This could be due to the developmental reasons of categorization and/or the one-to-one nature of play at earlier stages of development (Gillies-Rezo & Bosacki, 2003; Von Tetzchner, 2005).

Gillies-Rezo & Bosacki (2003) investigated children's perceptions of bullying in the Kindergarten classroom. They found that not only were bullying behaviours prevalent, but that participating children reported bullying both at home and prior to entering a compulsory school environment. Gillies-Rezo & Bosacki (2003) identified that the majority of incidents shared were not reported to adults, thus reinforcing the research finding that a considerable number of bullying victims do not report the bullying behaviours, as mentioned previously (BRIS,

2012; Elsea & Smith, 1998). Kyratzis (2004) found that conflicts among pre-school children serve also to construct identities, cultivate friendships while maintaining and transforming the social order within the peer culture; arguing that peer-talk is essential for the maintaining of peer culture and the negotiation of children's status within the group (Evaldsson, 1993, 2005; Goodwin, 1990; 2008). The lack of specific research devoted to studying bullying behaviour in preschools and thereby the lack of understanding of how children's interactions in these ages contribute to behaviours in later ages, has led to an interest in preschool as an important setting for further research.

Previous Research on Bullying on the Internet

The implications of the internet on the lives of children and keeping up to date with the ever-changing nature of technological advancements and children's social relationships in online settings are questions that are engaging the research community to an increasing extent. The use of the internet includes positive aspects in terms of socialization and self-realization as well as knowledge acquisition, civic engagement and finding creative outlets (Cassidy et al., 2013; Dunkels, 2012; Staksrud, Livingstone, Haddon, & Ólafsson, 2009). However, research focused on aggressions that children experience online also exposes the risks of bullying when being online. Research has also been conducted in establishing what children do online, what risk factors there are, and in establishing the predicting factors of risky and aggressive behaviour online (Berne et al., 2013; Cassidy et al., 2013; Staksrud et al., 2009). Most of these studies have been based on survey methods and interviews with focus groups, and few studies have focused on the interactions themselves (Berne et al., 2013; Staksrud et al., 2009; Vandenbosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). More recent studies have focused on the role of social media sites in the interactions between children, and how the interaction on websites is related to children's face-to-face interactions (Beckman, 2013; Berne, 2014; Livingstone, 2014; Staksrud, Ólafsson, & Livingstone, 2013). As is well known within the field of children's rights, children who are victims of bullying are often victims of multiple forms of violence, in the home, at school and in the community (The United Nations World Report on Violence against Children, 2006). With the expansion of the use of the Internet, and the

generalized use of Information Communications Technologies ICTs, this form of multi- or simultaneous victimization, extends to the Internet. For example, some researchers suggest that there are similar social techniques at work in bullying in face-to-face interactions compared to interactions on the Internet (Guise, Widdicombe, & McKinlay, 2007). Contradictory to this, others have suggested, and found support for, opposing positions, by which the social interactions online and in face-to-face interaction are identified as fundamentally different in nature (Mishna, Khoury-Kassabri, Gadalla, & Daciuk, 2012). Låftman, Modin and Östberg (2013) found, in their study of students in Stockholm, that there is a moderate "overlap between cyberbullying and traditional school bullying" (p.112) with only 25% of victims of cyberbullying also reporting being victims of school bullying. Their findings also point to a more significant overlap between indirect forms of bullying and bullying online. Kwan and Skoric (2013) similarly found a moderate relationship between being bullied in school and on Facebook, but they also point out that the vast majority of relationships established on Facebook are an extension of relationships "initiated offline".

A large portion of the research conducted in this area has been focused on determining predictive factors of online victimization and perpetration amongst children (Casas, Del Rey, & Ortega-Ruiz, 2013; Görzig, 2011; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Katzer, Fetchenhauer, & Belschak, 2009; Marcum, Higgins, Freiburger, & Ricketts, 2014; Mishna, et al., 2012; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Staksrud et al., 2009). These findings show differentiation between victims and perpetrators of traditional bullying and cyberbullying. In this particular area, as with investigations into the overlap between traditional forms of bullying and cyberbullying, results are inconclusive and sometimes also contradictory, as seen over the collective findings within the field. An example of this is Görzig's (2011) transnational study on the Internet use among 9-16 year olds across Europe. She found that those that bully others online, are likely also to bully offline. Researchers have further pointed out that social exclusion and a "lack of social popularity" is a strong predictive indicator of being a victim online (Beran & Li, 2005 Ellison, Steinfeld & Lampe, 2007; Katzer et al., 2009; Kwan & Skoric, 2013). Studies have also investigated the gender disparity between online and offline victimization, where girls have been found to be more likely than boys to become

bullies as well as victims online, and boys are more likely than girls to be bullies and victims of bullying offline, particularly physical forms of bullying (Berne et al., 2013; Marcum et al., 2014; Slonje & Smith, 2008). As the collected body of research that looks at bullying on the internet is based on survey and self-reporting types of qualitative and quantitative methods, there is a need for research that looks directly at online interactions to better understand how such behaviour develops in naturally occurring interaction online.

On-going Research on Bullying at the Department of Child and Youth Studies

As bullying is a serious problem and we still do not know enough about how to understand and prevent children from being involved in destructive relationships, Professor Cederborg has developed a research group at the Department of Child and Youth Studies at Stockholm University involving, so far together with one associate professor and four doctoral students. Three of these Ph.D. students seek to broaden the theoretical understanding of bullying practices by drawing on social and interactional perspectives where the focus is on actual practices that construct the life worlds of children in compulsory and preschools, but also on the Internet. The fourth Ph.D. student is investigating children and parents notifications of bullying to BEO (the Child and Student Ombudsman) during 2013. All four projects have been approved by the Ethical Review Board at Karolinska Institute in Stockholm.

Bullying as a Discursive Practice in Schools and Preschools[5]. Ann-Christin Cederborg, Camilla Rindstedt, Lina Lundström and Mari Kronlund.

Far too little is known about how children build peer-to-peer interaction when they are involved in bullying, and how their argumentations are built when trying to justify, rationalize, categorize, attribute and accuse others when putting forward perspectives. These two projects investigate how bullying practices are built up moment-by-moment through children's everyday interactions in school and preschool. The project explores what children say they do in relation to what is actually done when bullying practices are performed and managed. By studying such practices at the

senior level of a compulsory school (55 children, between 14 and 16 years of age) and in preschool classes (52 children between 3-5 years of age), we can increase understanding of how bullying is enacted among children at different stages of life. The analysis is influenced by previous research saying that (Evaldsson & Svahn, 2012) group dynamics and exclusion play a significant role in bullying behaviours when creating and maintaining friendships. Furthermore, as there has been a lack of research in preschools in Sweden regarding bullying behaviours, this project will allow us to further understand how young children interact playing one-to-one as well as in groups.

Approach and Methodology.

Inspired by more recent research, bullying is understood as a set of social practices where peers engage in indirect practices such as gossiping and social exclusion (Danby & Osvaldsson, 2011; Evaldsson & Svahn, 2012; Svahn, 2012). These current projects can be seen to complement studies using only self-reporting or laboratory methods. Direct and indirect observational methods are used to study children's peer-to-peer interaction in their everyday life in school and preschool, in combination with open-ended interviews where children report their images of recently experienced incidents of bullying. The choice of method means a choice of theoretical approaches, drawing on a combination of Conversational Analytic approaches (Heritage & Stivers, 1999), linguistic anthropology (Duranti, 1997), and an Interpretative Phenomenological approach (IPA). From a Conversational Analytic perspective, language is seen as *social action*, and the analysis of sequential patterns in everyday interaction is viewed as a key element in theoretical analysis. Interpretative Phenomenological analysis (IPA) is used to explore the experiences of the informants from their own perspective; yet, it allows moving from a descriptive level to interpretation (Dean, Smith, Payne, & Weinman, 2005).

These two projects are ethnographic studies (cf. Delamont, 2007; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) as child- and childhood researchers within the social sciences claim that ethnography is one of the best methods for studying childhood and children's social worlds (Prout & James, 1990). The method of ethnography allows the researcher a unique perspective of observing from the "inside out", to become one of the "gang" and allow for

those observed / participating to feel and act as "normal" as possible. An emerging trend over the last 20 years has been to conduct research *with* or *for* children, rather than, as earlier research, *on* children. By doing so, children have become research participants rather than research objects, which makes it possible to capture children's voices, perspectives and interests. In addition, researchers have developed a view of children as social actors in their own right and have adjusted their research methods accordingly (Corsaro, 2011). This entails adapting the view that children do not reproduce or passively learn adult based rules, but rather use these rules to support their own interests in peer-peer interaction (Evaldsson & Tellgren, 2009). Although there are no comparative studies regarding the impact of methodology specifically regarding bullying, it can be concluded that as in other areas of comparison, the inclusion of ethnography as a method allows for a larger scope of data, perspective and in-depth nature of said data.

An innovative and important research direction within ethnographic research is video ethnography (Goodwin, 2006; Heath, Hindmarsh & Luff, 2010 - for a discussion of this method; Ochs, Graesch, Mittmann, Bradbury, & Repetti, 2006), which inspired these projects. Ethnographic fieldwork involving videotaping makes it possible to analyze the practices children actively use to orchestrate their social organization (Goodwin, 2002). After some time in the field, a video camera is therefore used in order to record the daily peer interactions at preschools and schools. Video analysis makes it possible to analyze complex social interaction in a far more detailed fashion than that which is possible by ordinary observations (Ochs et al., 2006). The recorded sequences enable the researcher to listen repeatedly to (and examine) the sequences in order to study specific phenomena in detail. It involves collections of data that can be broken down and analyzed as situations, activities, interactions, or behavior of a certain type (Ochs et al., 2006). As well as documenting children's everyday peer activities through videotape, this long-term ethnographic study uses the ethnographic methods of participant observation and "deep hanging out" (Clifford, 1997) to describe and characterize the interactions with the participants of the study. Detailed field notes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) will be recorded throughout the fieldwork, and informal conversations (Bernard, 2006) with key informants will be implemented.

Theoretically, all participants are looked upon as contributors, constantly negotiating and changing their footing, involving words used, posture, gaze, set and stance as well as changes in tone of voice and tempo (Goffman, 1981). Based on phenomenological theory, participants are interviewed about their individual thoughts and beliefs of previously experienced bullying interactions. The interviews are semi-structured with open-ended questions. By using IPA, we can explore how participants make sense of and apply meaning to their experiences (Chapman & Smith, 2002). The method is based on the assumption that participants' accounts of a certain phenomenon can give an individual perspective on thoughts and beliefs in relation to previous experiences. By interpreting their accounts in open interviews of certain phenomena, such an analysis will make it possible to understand the meaning of the participants' experiences (Smith, 1997). The participants' attribution of meaning is seen as influenced by individual experiences, but also connected to social interactions shared with others (Cederborg, 2010; Willig, 2006). The analysis is focused on child perspectives where the researchers will attempt to place in the foreground children's voices, agency and life conditions at preschools and schools. Various qualitative child-centred approaches of inquiry are used in order to reduce the possible gap of generational unintelligibility and in order to explore the vantage points of children as social actors (Clark, 2011). The doctoral students collect their data over the period of one year. The data collected from the compulsory school has been finalized and data collection from the pre-school project is on-going. So far the tentative findings show that these projects can help to fill in the research gap of how children in different ages perform bullying behaviour.

Bullying Practices on the Internet. Ann-Christin Cederborg and Kim Sylwander.

Supported by Department of Child and Youth Studies, Stockholm University, this third project concerns children's bullying practices on the Internet. The project has adopted an approach where the focus of the inquiry will be children's and young people's interactions on public social networking settings online. In Sweden, children's connectivity has expanded rapidly. A child that was recently considered to be a high consumer,

has within the last five years come to be considered a normal consumer. According to the Swedish Media Council (Statens Medieråd, 2013) the daily use of the Internet has increased dramatically since 2010. In the age group 9-12 year olds the daily use of the Internet has increased from 32% to 55%, and among 13-16 year olds from 52 to 93%. This increase was partly explained by the increase of children possessing smartphones, where 62% of 9-12 year olds, 89% of 13-16 year olds and 84% of 17-18 year olds have their own smartphone. Social media is the most common activity that children engage in online, and girls are, to a much higher extent than boys, users of social media platforms. Seventy-one percent of 13-16 year olds and 78% of 17-18 year olds access social media platforms daily, and 42% of girls spend up to three hours a day on social media platforms compared to 15% of boys. Facebook is the most commonly used social media platform that children access. Among 9-12 year olds 68% have a Facebook profile, and among 13-16 year olds the figure is 93% (Statens Medieråd, 2013). The research design for this project is focused on the content of on-going online interactions between children and young people, in an attempt to investigate what is being said and how, from within the exchanges being made in different public settings online. Hence, this project attempts to situate itself within the research gap (Staksrud et al., 2009) by looking at the interactions as they are taking place online and thereby increasing understanding for how inclusionary and exclusionary practices function in naturally occurring interactions between children and youth in their social environments online. Inspired by previous research about on cyberbullying, as previously discussed, this on-going project will discuss the present definition of the term. However, as the approach of this project is inductive in nature, the preference of one definition over another does not have to be made a priori, but will rather make up part of the analytical body in relation to the data collected. Data is collected through a non-interventionist cyberethnographic approach (Kozinets, 2013; Markham & Baym, 2009; Murthy, 2008), which entails ethnographic observation of interactions between children and young people on public social networking sites. For the purpose of the study, only public online settings are observed, and the set of data is collected from one of the most commonly used public social networking sites among Swedish children and young people. The data for the project includes the complete body of interaction from profiles of over 100 young teens on this site, between the ages of 11-15 years of age, all of which reside in Sweden. The data set includes a mixed demographic of children, including children from urban and rural areas from all over Sweden. The interactions collected span from between 1-2 years back in time. All profiles selected are considered to belong to active users so as to ensure that the data collected entails interaction between users that interact on a daily basis with their peers via the chosen site. Field notes are kept and will also be used as a basis for analysis, as these allow the researcher to document context based specificities that are of important relevance to the understanding of the collected data. The interactions collected will be analyzed in depth, qualitatively and quantitatively. The inquiry will look at how aggressive behaviour develops through interaction and how children and young people perform identity, inclusion and exclusion. Dialogic narrative inquiry (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008; Freeman, 2011; Georgakopoulou, 2006), multimodal discourse analysis (Levine & Scollon, 2004) and discursive psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996) are the analytical frameworks adopted for the purpose of this project.

Perceptions of Bullying in Schools and Preschools. Ann-Christin Cederborg and Magnus Loftsson.

So far there has been limited research on how children and parents perceive children's exposure of bullying in schools and preschools and how their experiences are understood and managed by responsible schools and preschools. As Sweden has a BEO who is responsible for preventing, investigating and assessing cases of exposure, there is a need to understand how they apply legal aspects of bullying into real cases. Through documents from the BEO, the aim of this research project is to study how children, parents, responsible schools and preschools as well as the BEO understand and manage children's exposure of bullying by peers. The project will quantitatively analyze type of exposure related to age and gender and qualitatively analyze children's and parents' narratives with regard to exposure, in order to highlight experiences and consequences of bullying practices, but also to analyze the arguments that are used by responsible authorities when they are notified for not following the rules of how to prevent bullying. In addition,

an analyses of the BEO's decisions in each case will be performed and thus relate to how the legal aspects of bullying are transformed into reality. In this project we discursively study all the documents archived at the BEO during 2013, encompassing a total of 426 peer-to-peer bullying notifications and 414 of these children are between 7-19 years of age and 12 children are between 4-6 years of age.

In this project we base our understanding on the previous research described above but also on children exposed to violence and threats in school (Brå, 2013). No previous study has explored children/parents reports of bullying to BEO and specifically how authorities respond to these reports. This project thereby intends to contribute knowledge on how the concept of bullying is understood from a variety of variables, such as exposure and responsibility in relation to legal requirements and thus from a variety of perspectives such as that of the victim, the victim's parents and the alleged perpetrator.

Conclusions

Together with other national and international researchers, we agree that there is a need for broadening the understanding of bullying as a complex social group phenomenon. In addition, society and the range of environments in which bullying occurs have changed dramatically since the first definition was developed and with that the prerequisites for bullying interactions. Our research contributions are based on mainly qualitative approaches that, not only, allow for an interpretation based on children's own experiences of peer bullying, but also contribute to an interactive perspective of how children actually include and exclude each other in peer-to-peer interaction over a broad spectra of age, settings and media. It is our ambition and intention that the findings of these research projects will assist in the furthering of preventative measures and contribute to a deeper understanding of bullying behaviours in schools, preschools and online.

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