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Defending behavior in bullying situations

by

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*“The ultimate tragedy is not the
oppression and cruelty by the bad people
but the silence over that by the good people.”*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Defending behavior in bullying situations

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ABSTRACT

In order to encourage children and adolescents to defend and support their victimized peers, it is important to identify factors that either maximize or minimize the probability that students will engage in such behaviors. This thesis is composed of four studies designed to elucidate how a variety of factors work in conjunction to explain why some children defend their victimized classmates, whereas others remain passive or reinforce the bully. The conceptual framework of this thesis is drawn from several theoretical considerations, including social cognitive learning theory, the expectancy-value framework as well as the literature emphasizing the importance of empathy in motivating behaviors. Also the child-by-environment perspective and the social-ecological perspective influenced this research. Accordingly, several intra- and interpersonal characteristics (e.g., social cognitions, empathy, and social status) as well as group-level factors (e.g., norms) that may either enhance or reduce the probability that students defend their victimized peers are investigated.

In Studies I and II, the focus is on social cognitions, and special attention is paid to take into account the domain-specificity of cognition-behavior processes. Self-efficacy for defending is still an interest of study III, but the role of affective empathy on defending is also investigated. Also social status variables (preference and perceived popularity) are evaluated as possible moderators of links between intrapersonal factors and defending. In Study IV, the focus is expanded further by concentrating on characteristics of children's proximal environments (i.e.,

classroom). Bullying norms and collective perceptions (i.e., connectedness among the students and the teachers' ability to deal with bullying situations) are examined. Data are drawn from two research projects: the Kaarina Cohort Study (consisting of fourth and eighth graders) and the randomized controlled trial (RCT) evaluating the effects of the KiVa antibullying program (consisting of third to fifth graders).

The results of the thesis suggest that defending the victims of bullying is influenced by a variety of individual level motivational characteristics, such as social cognitions and affective empathy. Also, both perceived popularity and social preference play a role in defending, and the findings support the conceptualization that behavior results from the interplay between the characteristics of an individual child and their social-relational environment. Classroom context further influences students' defending behavior. Thus, antibullying efforts targeting peer bystanders should aim to influence intra- and interpersonal characteristics of children and adolescents as well as their social environment.

Kiusatun oppilaan puolustaminen ja tukeminen

Virpi Pöyhönen

Psykologian oppiaine

Käyttäytymistieteiden ja filosofian laitos

Turun yliopisto

TIIVISTELMÄ

Jotta lapsia ja nuoria voidaan rohkaista tukemaan ja puolustamaan kiusattuja luokkatovereita, on tiedettävä mitkä tekijät lisäävät tai vähentävät todennäköisyyttä kiusatun oppilaan puolustamiseen. Tämä väitöskirja koostuu neljästä osatutkimuksesta. Niissä tutkitaan useita eri muuttujia, jotka selittävät miksi jotkut lapset puolustavat ja tukevat kiusattuja luokkatovereitaan, kun taas jotkut pysyvät passiivisina tai kannustavat kiusaajaa. Vaikka keskeisin osa tätä väitöskirjaa on nimenomaan kiusatun oppilaan puolustamiseen ja tukemiseen vaikuttavat tekijät, myös muita tapoja käyttäytyä kiusaamistilanteessa (kiusaajan kannustaminen ja passiivisena pysyttelemineen) sisällytettiin kahteen osatutkimukseen. Väitöskirjan käsitteelliset puitteet on muodostettu useiden teoreettisten lähtökohtien pohjalta. Sen mukaisesti osatutkimuksissa tarkastellaan useita eri yksilön sisäisiä ja yksilöiden välisiä ominaisuuksia (esim. sosiaaliset kognitiot, empatia ja asema ryhmässä) sekä ryhmään liittyviä tekijöitä (esim. normit), jotka joko lisäävät tai estävät oppilaita puolustamasta kiusattuja luokkatovereitaan.

Osatutkimuksissa I ja II keskitytään sosiaalisiin kognitioihin. Tutkimuksissa kiinnitetään erityistä huomiota siihen, että kognitioita mitataan mahdollisimman tarkasti suhteessa tiettyyn käyttäytymiseen. Osatutkimuksessa III tarkastellaan sosiaalisten kognitoiden (tarkemmin pystyvyysusko) lisäksi empatian roolia kiusatun oppilaan puolustamisessa. Lisäksi tarkastellaan yhdysvaikutuksia, tarkemmin sitä mahdollistaako oppilaan asema ryhmässä yksilön sisäisten ominaisuuksien (empatia ja pystyvyysusko) ja käyttäytymisen välisen yhteyden.

Osatutkimuksessa IV kohdistetaan huomio ryhmään ja tutkitaan luokkatason tekijöitä (normit, jaetut käsitykset). Tutkimusten aineisto perustuu kahteen eri tutkimusprojektiin: Kaarina Kohorttitutkimus (osallistujat neljäs- ja kahdeksaluokkalaisia) ja Kiva Koulu -ohjelman vaikuttavuustutkimus (osallistujat kolmas-, neljäs-, ja viidesluokkalaisia).

Väitöskirjan tulokset osoittavat, että kiusatun oppilaan puolustamiseen vaikuttavat useat yksilön sisäiset (empatia, sosiaaliset kognitiot) ja yksilöiden väliset (asema ryhmässä) tekijät. Tulokset myös tukevat ajatusta, että käyttäytyminen kiusaamistilanteessa on seurausta yksilön sisäisten ja yksilöiden välisten tekijöiden vuorovaikutuksesta. Myös luokkaympäristö vaikuttaa siihen puolustavatko oppilaat kiusattua luokkatoveriaan. Rohkaistaessa lapsia ja nuoria tukemaan ja puolustamaan kiusattuja oppilaita näihin kaikkiin tekijöihin on syytä kiinnittää huomiota.

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PREFACE

Research (research = tutkimus, re-search = uudelleen etsiminen).

tutkimus

substantiivi

1. perinpohjainen jonkin asian selvittäminen.

etsiä

1. koettaa löytää, hakea. koettaa saada näkyviin, käsiinsä, käyttöönsä, haltuunsa jokin kateissa, tietymättömissä oleva.

uudelleen

1. uudestaan. vielä kerran, taas, jälleen.
2. toisen kerran, toistamiseen.
3. uudella tavalla, toisenlaiseksi.

On niin monta ihmistä, jotka ovat olleet osallisena tähän kaikkeen, asian selvittämiseen, etsimiseen, uudestaan, toisen kerran, uudella tavalla (ja ei muuten ole tämä uudelleen etsiminen aina helppoa). Monta ihmistä, joita haluan kiittää siitä, että tämä väitöskirja on.

Ensimmäisenä, Prof. Christina Salmivalli, jonka tutkimusryhmään tulin jo monta vuotta sitten, ensin tutkimusapulaisena, sen jälkeen tutkijakoulutettavana. Olen saanut todellista ohjausta; tukea, vapautta, rajoja, ystävyyttä, ymmärrystä silloin kuin omat rajat tulevat vastaan. Aloitin KiVa Koulussa aivan sen alusta (ja jo sitä ennen olet ollut se henkilö, joka avaa minulle koko kiusaamisilmiötä) ja sitten sain kasvaa sen mukana. Olet uskonut tutkijuuteeni, kouluttajuuteeni, taitoihini materiaalien kehittämisessä (ja vielä kannustanut kirjailijuuudessa, siinä mikä saattaa syödä edellä mainituista). En olisi tässä ilman tukeasi, enkä voi kuvitella parempaa mentoria ja ystävää.

Haluan myös kiittää toista ohjaajaani, Prof. Jaana Juvosta, joka (pitkästä välimatkastamme huolimatta) on aina läsnä, auttaa viemään artikkelin käsikirjoituksia eteenpäin, löytää niihin

tarinan silloin kuin se on minulta hukassa. Ja kysyy oikeat kysymykset silloin kun on tarpeen.

Also, I'm deeply delighted and honored to have Prof. Debra Pepler as opponent and a reviewer and Prof. Gianluca Gini as a reviewer to this thesis. Your comments were extremely valuable.

Ja on myös Psykologian oppiaine. On mahtavaa kun on laitos (oppiaine), missä on juuri teidän kaltaisia (ja nyt en nimeä, koska kaikki olette). Ja että siellä on psykologian toimisto, Outi, Minna, Terttu, Nina. Kiitos vastauksista, selvittämisestä, siitä että aina voi tulla kysymään, vaikka kysymys olisi heikosti muotoiltu ja hermostunut. Ja ehkä tämä on se asia, mitä ajattelen kun mietin koko Psykologian oppiainetta; ei käännytetä pois, vaan jäädään. Uskon, että se on harvinaista.

Ja sitten. Koko KiVa Koulu porukka (entiset ja nykyiset). On hurjaa ja aivan älyttömän hienoa, että meitä on niin monta. Kiitos seminaareista ja tutkimuskeskusteluista ja koulutuksista ja ihan vaan keskusteluista, siitä että olette (Elisa, Miia, Claire, Silja, Anne, Sanna H., Sanna, R., Tiina T., Annarilla, An, Antti, Ari, Juha, Tiina A., Mira T.). Ja Kiva toimisto (Marita, Tuija, Henna), kiitos.

Haluan vielä erikseen kiittää Kätlinä ja Ernestiä. Yhteistyöstä, kielenhuollosta ja (ehkä kuitenkin eniten) ystävydestä, siitä että olette aina (ja asia voi liittyä aivan mihin tahansa). Aina olette.

Ulla, kiitos (ystävyyden, sen että ollaan tunnettu jo vaikka kuinka kauan, Halisten solusta alkaen ja sitten tämä ystävyys vain kasvaa, pysyy, lisäksi) kielenhuollosta (ja siitä että tehtiin viimeiset vaikka oli loma ja mökki).

Ja myös kaikki, kaikki, ystävät, joita en erikseen mainitse. Tiedän olevani onnekas, kun on tuommoista tyyppejä ympärillä.

Perhe (Leena, Seppo, Merja), kaikissa liikkeissä ei aina ole helppoa pysyä mukana, kun niitä on välillä paljon ja moneen suuntaan. Mutta hienoa on se, että tuette, haluatte että minulla on hyvä, olette olemassa. On valtavan tärkeää, että on perhe. Ja Sisko. Ja juuret.

Ja Christian, jos mennään tekemisasioihin, niin tätä väitöskirjaa ei olisi tullut (ainakaan tämmöisenä ja vielä painettuna versiona) ilman sinun taitto-osaamista. Sitä, että lomallasi autoit InDesignin kanssa. Yksin ei olisi tullut mitään. Ja jos mennään niihin muihin asioihin, saattaa myös olla, että ilman sinun rakkautta, tukea, olemista, tätä väitöskirjaa ei olisi tullut. Ei voi tietää, mutta tärkeintä on että olet.

Yksin ei tule mitään.

Turun kesässä (2013),

Virpi

LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

- I. **Pöyhönen V., & Salmivalli C.** (2008). New directions in research and practice addressing bullying: focus on defending behavior. In Pepler D. & Craig W. (eds.), *Understanding and addressing bullying: An international perspective, PREVNet Series, Vol 1.* (pp. 26–43). Bloomington, Indiana.

- II. **Pöyhönen, V., Juvonen, J., & Salmivalli, C.** (2012). Standing up for a victim, siding with the bully, or standing by? Bystander responses in bullying situations. *Social Development, 21*, 722–741.

- III. **Pöyhönen, V., Juvonen, J., & Salmivalli C.** (2010). What does it take to stand up for the victim of Bullying? The interplay between personal and social factors. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 56*, 143–163.

- IV. **Pöyhönen, V., Juvonen, J., Peets, K., & Salmivalli, C.** (2013). Defending victimized peers: A contextual analysis of classrooms norms and collective perceptions. Submitted for publication.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a serious and a widely spread problem in schools. It has severe and sometimes long-lasting consequences on the victims' psychosocial development (see e.g., Reijntjes, Kamphuis, Prinzie, & Telch, 2010 for a meta-analysis). This is not surprising as the targets of bullying experience repeated attacks from their peers who are in a more powerful position in the peer group (Olweus, 1999). During the past two decades, a growing body of research has emphasized the impact of peer group dynamics on bullying. Indeed, bullying expands beyond the dyad of the bully and the victim as it usually occurs in the presence of bystanders (Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig, 2001; O'Connell, Pepler, & Graig, 1999). Also, the negative effects of bullying extend to students who merely witness it; they feel more anxious, have increasing thoughts concerning school avoidance (Nishina & Juvonen, 2005), and worry more about their safety at school (Gini, Pozzoli, Borghi, & Fanzoni, 2008).

When students intervene on behalf of the victims, they are often successful in stopping bullying (Hawkins et al., 2001). Defending can also alleviate the pain experienced by victims, or protect at-risk children from ending up victimized in the first place. For example, in a study utilizing dyadic measures, Sainio, Veenstra, Huitsing, and Salmivalli (2011) found that defended victims were both intra- and interpersonally more well adjusted than their undefended peers. Specifically, they were less anxious and less rejected by their peers. Furthermore, in classrooms where the overall level of defending was high, social anxiety and rejection were less likely to lead to victimization (Kärnä, Voeten, Poskiparta, & Salmivalli, 2010). Similarly, utilizing hypothetical scenarios Gini, Pozzoli and colleagues (2008) found that students liked the victim more when bystanders defended the victim compared to when bystanders supported the bully. However, this was true only among the preadolescent sample (12-year-olds), but not in the middle childhood sample (9-year-olds), suggesting that the influence of the peer group on personal attitudes becomes stronger with age. As standing up for the victims makes such a difference, it is not surprising that an important part of contemporary antibullying programs is to encourage bystanders to support and defend their victimized peers (see Ttofi & Farrington,

2011 for a meta-analysis). In order to encourage and guide students in this often challenging task, it is important to first identify factors that either maximize or minimize the probability that students will engage in defending behaviors.

The conceptual framework of this thesis is drawn from social cognitive learning theory (e.g., Bandura, 1997, 2001), the expectancy-value framework (e.g., Atkinson, 1964; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992) as well as the literature emphasizing the importance of empathy in motivating behaviors (e.g., Hoffman, 1990, 2000). Furthermore, both the child-by-environment perspective (e.g., Hodges, Malone, & Perry, 1997; Ladd, 2003) and the social-ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; see also Rodkin & Gest, 2011; Rodkin & Hodges, 2003; Swearer & Espelage, 2004) emphasize the idea that the characteristics of an individual child and the characteristics of their close environment synergistically influence behaviors. The main difference between these perspectives is that the child-by-environment perspective stresses the importance of the child's social-relational environment (e.g., social status), whereas the social-ecological perspective places additional weight on larger groups (e.g., the classroom, school, community) in which the child is embedded.

When contextualizing defending, I view bullying as a complex status-related process (see e.g., Juvonen & Galván, 2008; Salmivalli & Peets, 2008) wherein characteristics and behaviors of individual members of the peer group influence group level mechanisms, such as norms, and group level processes influence the individuals within the group. Rather than considering a single source of motivation for defending victimized peers, such as social cognitions, I investigate a myriad of factors when explaining such behaviors. Thus, in this thesis I bring together several theories by considering intra- and interpersonal characteristics (e.g., social cognitions, empathy, and social status) as well as group level factors (e.g., norms) that may either enhance or reduce the probability that students defend their victimized classmates. In addition, this work has clear practical importance for guiding antibullying interventions. In this thesis, I focus on defending behavior in order to understand what might break the silence of the good people. However, in Studies I and II, we¹ also included other ways to act in bullying situations – reinforcing the

1 When using the personal pronoun “we” I refer to the authors contributing to the original publications included in this thesis.

bully and remaining passive. This allowed us to contrast defending with these behaviors so that unique characteristics associated with defending victimized classmates could be identified.

1.1 Defending conceptualized

1.1.1 *What do bystanders do when someone is victimized?*

Bullying usually happens in the presence of bystanders (see e.g., Hawkins et al., 2001; O'Connell et al., 1999). Unfortunately, when facing bullying, children rarely intervene on behalf of the victim. As a matter of fact, observations of bullying incidents in Canadian elementary schools revealed that peers intervened in only about 10–19% of bullying situations despite being present in over 85% of episodes (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). Converging evidence (e.g., Andreou & Metallidou, 2004; Camodeca & Goossens, 2005; Goossens, Olthof, & Dekker, 2006; Menesini, Codecasa, Benelli, & Cowie, 2003; Schäfer & Korn, 2004; Sutton & Smith, 1999; Salmivalli, Lappalainen, & Lagerspetz, 1999; Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, 1996; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004) indicates that students participate in bullying situations in a variety of ways. When witnessing bullying, the majority of students act in ways that either actively or passively support the bully. For example, utilizing peer reports, Salmivalli and colleagues (1996) found that a large proportion (26.3%) of 12–13-year-old children engage in roles that actively support bullies. These roles include *assistants* and *reinforcers of the bully*. *Assistants* are described as active (similar to bullies), but they show more follower- than leader-like bullying behavior. *Reinforcers of the bully* act in ways (e.g., laughing and providing an audience for the bully) that enhance the likelihood that the bully engages in, maintains, and escalates aggression toward their victims. *Outsiders*, another large group of children (23.7%), remain passive observers during bullying situations or do nothing when bullying happens (e.g., pretend they do not notice the bullying). In addition to the roles that actively or passively let the bullying happen, there is a group of students (17.3%) who support and *defend* victimized peers. Altogether, it seems that children and adolescents often behave in ways that are likely to maintain bullying and, thus, possibly create an environment that fosters probullying norms instead of antibullying ones (Juvonen & Galván, 2008; Salmivalli & Peets, 2008).

The picture looks very different when students' attitudes and their intended behaviors

in the bullying situations are considered. In general, children as well as adolescents do not approve of the behavior of the bullies or those who assist the bullies (Gini, Pozzoli et al., 2008). Actually, students do not even approve of the passive bystanding in the situation, but view it as reinforcing (the actions of) the bully (Cowie, 2000; Gini, Pozzoli et al., 2008). They also have intentions to intervene in bullying situations on behalf of the victim and they report trying to have done so in the past (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Children are also able to suggest a variety of relevant strategies through which bystanders may intervene (Rock & Baird, 2012). However, as Rock and Baird (2012) asked the participants “What should the [bystander] do?”, it’s unclear, whether students themselves are (even hypothetically) able and willing to apply these strategies they suggested if they were to intervene in the situation. With increasing age, attitudes become more approving of bullying behavior and less supportive towards the victims (Gini, Pozzoli et al., 2008; Rigby & Slee, 1991, 1993). In contrast, older students suggest more strategies that should be used to intervene bullying than younger students. This is in accordance with the development of cognitive and socio-emotional abilities, such as perspective taking skills (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006) but, again, inconsistent with actual behavior, as (at least peer reported) defending declines with age, whereas reinforcing the bully becomes more common (Menesini et al., 2003; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). Altogether, research suggests that children, as well as adolescents, *would like to* support and defend the victim of bullying and know what *should* be done in order to do so, yet relatively few students act according to their beliefs. Thus, despite the students’ awareness of what the morally right thing to do is when they witness bullying, something prevents them from translating their thoughts into action.

1.1.2 Measuring defending behavior

Defending, as well as other participant roles, have often been assessed using peer nominations (see e.g., Andreou & Metallidou, 2004; Caravita, DiBlasio, & Salmivalli, 2009; Gini, Albiero, Benelli, & Altoè, 2007, 2008; Goossens et al., 2006; Sutton & Smith, 1999; Salmivalli, Lappalainen, & Lagerspetz, 1998; Salmivalli et al., 1996; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004), but self reports have also been used in several studies (see e.g., Pozzoli, Ang, & Gini, 2012; Pozzoli & Gini, 2010). These two methods do not necessarily tap the same construct. In their

seminal study, Salmivalli and colleagues (1996) gathered both self- and peer-reported data on participant roles and found significant but low correlations between the measures. Sutton and Smith (1999) reported similar findings. Their results indicated that only 30% of the sample nominated themselves in their most peer-nominated role. For example, 60% of peer-nominated bullies claimed to show more defender behavior than anything else. It seems that children tend to describe themselves in a favorable light, underestimating their probullying behavior and overestimating their antibullying behavior (Salmivalli et al., 1996; Sutton & Smith, 1999). When comparing self reports, peer reports, systematic observations, and diaries of bullying and victimization, peer reports have on average the strongest correlations with the other three methods (Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000). In terms of defending behavior, it is possible that when students respond to self-report items, they tell us what they feel they should do or what they want to do, instead of their actual behavior. Students do want to support their victimized peers instead of joining the bully (see e.g., Cowie, 2000; Gini, Pozzoli et al., 2008; Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Rigby & Johnson, 2006). When using peer-reported data, this social desirability effect is no longer operating and the fact that the assessment is based on the opinions of the whole school class is likely to improve the reliability of the measure. Thus, in this thesis, I used peer nominations to measure defending as well as other bystanding behaviors in bullying situations. In their study, Salmivalli and colleagues categorized children into the participant roles (see Salmivalli et al., 1996 for a more detailed description of the categorization process). However, as categorization of variables is always arbitrary and limits exploring the whole variance of the phenomena, we did not categorize children into specific roles in any of the studies. Rather, we retained the continuous nature of the behavioral scales.

1.1.3 Defending behavior and related constructs

Defending behaviors include telling the teacher about bullying episodes, comforting the victim, as well as direct intervention in bullying situations (e.g., Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). It should be kept in mind that although defending, as a word, easily makes us think about direct intervention during a bullying situation, the way it has been used in the bullying literature also includes more indirect forms to support the victim, such as comforting the victim and telling to the teacher about bullying. Thus, in this thesis, when referring to defending behavior, I do not only mean

observable intervention, but also discrete forms of defending which may be left unnoticed when using observational methods.

Defending behavior shares characteristics with prosocial behavior that refers to voluntary actions taken in order to benefit another person, such as helping, sharing, caring, and comforting (Batson, 1998; Eisenberg et al., 2006). Like prosocial behavior, the concept of defending does not include the motive of behavior, which may be either selfish or altruistic (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998; Fabes, Carlo, Kupanoff, & Laible, 1999). Defending behavior also includes direct actions against the bully; actually confronting the bully is the most common strategy of intervention students suggest, followed by getting the teacher to help, and comforting the victim (Rock & Baird, 2011). This raises the question whether students engage in aggressive acts when confronting the bully in order to defend their victimized peer. Research does not completely support this idea.

It seems that when students report ways to confront the bully, they are more likely to use assertive strategies (i.e., “asking why” and “telling angrily [the bully] to stop” than aggressive ones (i.e., “hitting and pushing [the bully] back”) (Camodeca & Goossens, 2005). Further, like prosocial students, students who tend to defend the victim of bullying manifest low levels of physical and relational aggression (Crapanzano, Frick, Childs, & Terranova, 2011). Defending and prosocial behavior are also only moderately correlated, suggesting that they are overlapping, but distinguishable constructs (Crapanzano et al., 2011).

Within the framework of Resource Control Theory (Hawley, 1999, 2003), it has been argued that prosocial behavior and aggression should not to be considered to be opposite ends of the same continuum, but as distinct dimensions that can overlap and serve the same function (i.e., gaining resources within the group). From this perspective, Olthof, Goossens, Vermande, Aleva, and Van der Meulen (2011) hypothesized that both students who bully and students who defend the victim might be classified as bistrategics, employing prosocial as well as aggressive strategies in social situations. However, they found that bullies (and, to a slightly lesser extent, their supporters), but not defenders, were likely to be bistrategics.

Observational studies (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Hawkins et al., 2001) give us a somewhat

different picture of the strategies students use when intervening in bullying situations. It seems that defending behaviors depend on the context (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Hawkins et al., 2001); although most of the strategies used to intervene in bullying in the classroom were non-aggressive (Atlas & Pepler, 1998), 47% of the peer interventions on the playground were aggressive (Hawkins et al., 2001). In the playground context (Hawkins et al., 2001), students started to intervene using non-aggressive (i.e., assertive) strategies, but moved to aggressive ones if those proved to be ineffective in stopping the bullying. Most of the interventions were targeted towards the bully, and when the bully was targeted the interventions were more likely to be aggressive ones than when targeted towards the victim or the bully-victim dyad.

Altogether, research conducted on children's prosocial behavior may give us some indications on the factors that characterize defending and supporting victimized peers, but it is possible that, at least when children confront the bully directly, their behavior might also include aggressive strategies (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Hawkins et al., 2001). Furthermore, prosocial behavior is, at least to some extent, normative and thus well-accepted in most groups (Chang, 2004; Stormshak, Bierman, Bruschi, Dodge, & Coie, 1999). As such, we should not think that defending behavior per se shares the same antecedents as prosocial behavior in general. Prosocial behavior rarely contains a threat to the individual, but supporting and defending the victim of bullying may make the students feel afraid of possible negative consequences (e.g., retaliation from the bully) of their actions.

1.1.4 Bullying as a status-related group process

When we want to understand the obstacles children and adolescents face when they want to support their victimized peers, we need to understand the mechanisms of bullying. Bullying is, by definition (Olweus, 1999), characterized by an imbalance of power between the victimized student and the bully. The imbalance of power may result from different characteristics, such as physical size (e.g., weight and height; Atlas & Pepler, 1998). However, several researchers highlight the role of status-related processes in sustaining and maintaining bullying. For example, Juvonen and Galván (2008) characterize bullying as “serving a means to define and maintain group's goals” and emphasize the role of high status bullies in defining and maintaining

probullying norms in the group, which in turn affects the acceptability of such behaviors. Similarly, Salmivalli and Peets (2008) see bullying as “an attempt to gain and maintain social status in the peer group”. From these perspectives, bullying others does not primarily result from being generally aggressive or having deficiencies in processing social information (cf. e.g., Crick & Dodge, 1994), but may reflect high social intelligence and highly selective aggression (Sutton, Smith, & Swettenham, 1999; Peeters, Cillessen, & Scholte, 2010). Accordingly, a study by Olthof and colleagues (2011) showed that the majority of bullies can be classified as bistrategics, students who use both coercive (i.e., aggressive) and prosocial (i.e., cooperative) strategies to win resources within the group. Status in the peer group is overall important for children and adolescents. For example, adolescents prioritize status over several domains of their social lives including friendships (LaFontana & Cillessen, 2010). It seems, however, that status goals (i.e., achieving power, status, or influence in relationships) are especially important to students who bully others (Caravita & Cillessen, 2012; Olthof et al., 2011; Sijtsema, Veenstra, Lindenberg, & Salmivalli, 2009).

On the interpersonal level, bullying has distinct relations to two dimensions of peer status. It is positively related to perceived popularity (see e.g., Caravita & Cillessen, 2012; Caravita et al., 2009; de Bruyn, Cillessen, Wissink, 2010), which refers to visibility, prestige, or dominance and is measured by asking students who they consider popular in their peer group (e.g., Cillessen & Rose, 2005). In contrast, the relation between bullying and peer acceptance (measured by asking students who they like the most) is negative (e.g., Caravita et al., 2009; de Bruyn et al., 2010; Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999). Thus, in general, students who bully others are perceived to be popular among their peers but they are not well-liked. It is also possible, that bullying is a successful strategy to gain and maintain popularity in the peer group (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003), especially when it is accompanied with other competencies, such as social intelligence (Peeters et al., 2010). As perceived popularity reflects social dominance, it is not surprising that many students who bully are central and visible members of their peer group (i.e., school class), possessing high levels of resource control and social leadership (Peeters et al., 2010; Olthof et al., 2011). In their study, de Bruyn and colleagues (2010) found that bullying was typical of early adolescents who were either very

high in perceived popularity or very low in acceptance. This suggests that bullying is a polarized phenomenon that is predicted by two types of position in the peer group; either being rejected and disruptive, or being popular and powerful.

If bullies are popular, dominant, and central members of the peer group (Caravita et al., 2009; de Bruyn et al., 2010; Lease, Kennedy, & Axelrod, 2002; Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2006), they are also in the position to determine norms of the group and influence the behavior of bystanders (Juvonen & Galván, 2008; Salmivalli & Peets, 2008). Thus, in order to either lower their own risk of becoming the next victim (self-protection), or increase their own social standing (self-promotion) bystanders might choose to take sides with the bully (i.e., to reinforce or assist the bully) or remain passive (Juvonen & Galván, 2008). Also, attacks by dominant bullies combined with inaction of bystanders on behalf of the victim further supports the impression that bullying is perceived as acceptable or even “cool”, which in turn results in norms that do not reflect the attitudes of the majority, but still promote compliance within the group (Juvonen & Galván, 2008). For example, when students witness bullying they may rely on reactions of others as cues for prevalent norms in the classroom and, as a result of passivity or reinforcement of the bully, perceive the attitudes of their peers to be more supportive of the bullies’ actions than they actually are.

Pluralistic ignorance arises when students (falsely) assume that their peers’ behavior reflects accurately their attitudes, but understand that their own behavior may contradict the private attitudes. Indeed, a study by Sandstrom & Bartini (2010) showed that pluralistic ignorance plays a role in bullying. Their results indicated, that children saw themselves more disapproving towards bullying and more supportive towards the victims than they believed their classmates to be. Furthermore, the larger this discrepancy was, the more likely students were to remain passive in bullying situations. In other words, if students see themselves as highly prosocial and their peers to be quite the opposite, they seem to downplay their attitudes by behaving in a neutral fashion that does not directly contradict their (false) perceptions of the group norm. So, when hoping to defend their peers, children and adolescents face powerful bullies accompanied with powerful group mechanisms, which unfortunately may push them

towards siding with the bully or remaining passive in the situation.

1.2 Defending investigated

1.2.1 *Do social cognitions influence bystander behavior in bullying situations?*

From the point of view of social cognitive learning theory (see e.g., Bandura, 1997, 2001), students' behavior in bullying situations is guided by their cognitions, such as self-efficacy (i.e., beliefs about one's capacity to perform a specific task), outcome expectations (i.e., beliefs concerning the consequences of certain behavior), and outcome values (i.e., value placed on various outcomes of certain behavior). It has been argued, that each one of these cognitions is important for understanding behavior, and that they predict behavior independently from each other (Bandura, 1997).

Self-efficacy beliefs are defined as “beliefs in one's capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (Bandura, 1997). The concept thus refers to one's self-perceived ability to perform a specific act in a specific situation. In addition to thinking that bullying is wrong, one should feel capable of defending the victim of bullying in order to do so. However, studies investigating the role of self-efficacy in defending behavior, show somewhat conflicting findings. For example, in their study with adolescents, Gini, Albiero and colleagues (2008) discovered that social self-efficacy (i.e., students' perception of being competent in social situations) was the key component that differentiated defending behavior from passive bystanding. On the other hand, Andreou and Metallidou (2004) found that elementary school children's social self-efficacy (self-efficacy for assertion) was not associated with standing up for the victim. Both studies utilized rather general measures of self-efficacy and the ambiguous findings may be due to the different operationalizations of the construct. As the domain-specific nature of self-efficacy beliefs has been strongly emphasized (see e.g., Bandura, 1997, 2001), in this thesis I assessed self-efficacy beliefs specifically related to defending behavior. Self-efficacy for defending was included in all of the studies in this thesis, and was expected to be positively related to defending.

Additionally, it is likely that outcome expectations predict behavior in bullying

situations independently from self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). However, self-efficacy beliefs have been considered to have the greatest influence on behavior over other cognitive factors (Bandura, 1997, 2001). This emphasis may have led to an exaggerated focus on self-efficacy at the expense of other cognitive constructs, such as outcome expectations (Williams, 2010). Studies focusing on the link between children's positive beliefs about the consequences of aggression and aggressive behavior have shown that also outcome expectations guide behaviors (e.g., Boldizar, Perry, & Perry, 1989; Hall, Herzberger, & Skowronski, 1998; Perry, Williard, Perry, 1990; Perry, Perry, & Rasmussen, 1986). For instance, Perry and colleagues (1990) found that, when compared to their non-aggressive agemates, aggressive children expected aggressive behavior to result in tangible and status rewards. Furthermore, in studies conducted by Perry and colleagues (1986; 1990) the correlations between self-efficacy and outcome expectations varied from weak to moderate, suggesting that the constructs would be independent form each other. Nevertheless, the effects were not tested simultaneously in the same model. In contrast, Andreou and Metallidou (2004) tested the effects of both self-efficacy for aggression and self-efficacy for assertion on bystander behaviors simultaneously with outcome expectations. The results indicated that aggression-related outcome expectations (i.e., expectations of victim suffering and expectations of reward) were not linked to any of the behaviors measured (defending, staying outside, reinforcing the bully). However, it would be premature to conclude from the null findings of Andreou and Metallidou (2004) that outcome expectations fail to predict defending behaviors, as their study did not take into account the domain-specificity of cognition-behavior processes. Thus, in Study I (in addition to defending-related self-efficacy) we included defending-related outcome expectations in order to investigate whether those would be related to students' tendency to defend their victimized peer as well as other bystander dimensions. Positive outcome expectations of defending were expected to increase the likelihood of such behaviors.

Outcome values (i.e., the degree to which individuals attach importance on attaining certain outcomes) are also important determinants of behavior (Atkinson, 1964; Bandura, 1997, 2001; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992). Thus, even if witnesses expect positive outcomes as a result of defending, they may not do so unless they consider the outcome

to be personally important. Accordingly, it has been proposed that outcome values moderate the effect of outcome expectations on behavior (Williams, Anderson, & Winnett, 2005). Like self-efficacy, both outcome expectations and outcome values are domain-specific in nature. In the research literature, defending has been associated with two potential positive outcomes; bullying decreasing (O'Connell et al., 1999; Salmivalli, Voeten, & Poskiparta, 2011) and the victim's maladjustment being reduced (Sainio et al., 2011). However, the witnesses of bullying might be more concerned about personal (and possibly negative) consequences, such as losing their status among their peers once they take sides with the victim (Juvonen & Galván, 2008; Slee, 1994). In Study II, we expanded the focus of Study I in three ways. First, in addition to outcome expectations we included outcome values in the analyses. Second, we assessed both expected outcomes and expected values as a result of defending in a more specific way (i.e., in relation to bullying decreasing, the victim feeling better, and one's own status improving). We expected that positive outcome expectations and valuing such outcomes would be positively associated with defending. Third, we included interactions between expectations and values, hypothesizing that to defend a victim, bystanders should not only expect positive outcomes, but also value such outcomes (e.g., consider it personally important to alleviate the pain of the victim).

1.2.2 Does empathy play a role in defending behavior?

Besides cognitions, such as efficacy, emotions are also likely to contribute to whether a child is willing to stand up for another. Empathy has been defined as “feelings that are more congruent with other's situation than with [one's] own situation” (Hoffmann, 2000, p. 30) and “the ability to understand and share another's emotional state or context” (Cohen & Strayer, 1996, p. 988). The first definition emphasizes the affective nature of empathy, whereas the latter illustrates both affective and cognitive components of empathy. Cognitive empathy refers to mental perspective taking, whereas affective (emotional) empathy refers to vicarious sharing of emotion (e.g. Davis, 1983; Duan & Hill, 1996; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). In other words, cognitive empathy involves the skill to understand how others feel, whereas affective empathy refers to the affective ability to actually feel the emotion similar to the other person's emotional state.

As empathy is an important factor that explains prosocial and related behaviors, such as helping others (see Eisenberg & Miller, 1987 for more detailed information), it is also likely to account for why some children defend and support their victimized peers. However, studies investigating the role of empathy in defending, show somewhat ambiguous findings (Barchia & Bussey, 2011; Caravita et al., 2009; Gini et al., 2007; Gini, Albiero et al., 2008). For example, Gini and colleagues (2007) found that empathy was associated with adolescents' greater tendency to defend their victimized peers and was associated with lower levels of bullying behavior among adolescent boys. However, Gini, Albiero and colleagues (2008) subsequently concluded that empathy was positively related to both defending behavior and passive bystanding among adolescents, and thus fails to differentiate students who tend to support the victim of bullying from students who remain passive in bullying situations. In their studies, Gini and colleagues (2007, 2008) operationalized empathy as a single construct consisting of both affective and cognitive components. When affective and cognitive empathy are distinctly assessed, affective empathy predicts defending behavior among boys in mid-childhood, whereas cognitive empathy is associated with higher levels of bullying behavior in adolescence (Caravita et al., 2009). These findings suggest, that a cognitive understanding of others' feelings can be used against others, whereas feeling what others feel is more likely to trigger behaviors that would ease children's own negative affect. Accordingly, in Study III we distinguished affective and cognitive empathy in order to disentangle their effects on defending behavior. We expected affective empathy to be positively related to defending.

Recently, it has been acknowledged that empathy, like cognitions, might also be context-specific (MacEvoy & Leff, 2012). This means that when designing tools to measure empathy-related constructs in the context of bullying, we should avoid non-specific item content, such as "someone I care" or "other people", and be more specific when defining the target of empathic emotions. Thus, in Study IV, we assessed empathy towards a victimized peer. Furthermore, as previous research on defending behavior leans towards separating affective and cognitive dimensions of empathy, this distinction was included in our target-specific empathy measure.

1.2.3 Does social status enable defending?

As status related processes play such a big role in the mechanisms of bullying, it is very likely that they play a role in defending behavior as well. It is plausible, that students need to be in a good position in their peer group in order to take sides with the victim of bullying, and to challenge the bullies either by directly intervening or in more indirect forms (e.g., comforting the victim or reporting bullying to the teacher) because victims are often rejected by the peer group (see e.g., Hodges et al., 1997; Hodges & Perry, 1999). Otherwise they might risk their own safety or status within the group (Juvonen & Galván, 2008).

Several studies have shown that social preference (i.e., being liked [and not disliked] among peers) is linked with prosocial behavior (e.g. Parkhurst & Hopmeyer, 1998; Sandstrom & Cillessen, 2006) and specifically with defending (Caravita et al., 2009; Goossens et al., 2006; Salmivalli et al., 1996). So, students who defend the victim of bullying are well-liked among their classmates, but are they also perceived as popular? Perceived popularity has been found to be associated with antisocial interactions, including bullying others (Caravita et al., 2009; Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004; Cillessen & Rose, 2005; Lease et al. 2002; Newcomb, Bukowski, & Pattee, 1993; Parkhurst & Hopmeyer 1998; Sandstrom & Cillessen, 2006). It has been suggested that these two types of status serve different functions. According to Cillessen (2009), social preference may enable individuals to be empathic, understanding, and supportive in their interactions with others and to respond to the needs of others, whereas perceived popularity may allow individuals to be well-connected leaders who can achieve goals in the peer group in effective and assertive ways. It may be that both types of status are needed in order to stand up for the victim of bullying. Before this thesis, only one study (Caravita et al., 2009) had assessed the association between perceived popularity and defending. Being among the five most popular kids in the class was associated with the tendency to defend or support victimized peers among elementary school children. Thus, in Study III, we assessed both social preference and perceived popularity in relation to defending. We expected students who tend to defend victims of bullying to be both well-liked and perceived as popular by their class mates.

Furthermore, social standing in the peer group may interact with intrapersonal factors such as social cognitions and empathy (Caravita et al., 2009). As status is such an important

issue for children and adolescents, it is possible that in order to behave upon their emotions and cognitions, students need to have a secure position in the peer group. In addition to measurement issues, these moderating variables might further explain conflicting findings concerning the associations of social cognitions and empathy with defending. Guided by child-by-environment perspectives (Hodges et al., 1997; Ladd, 2003), we tested in Study III the hypothesis that social preference and perceived popularity moderate the links of self-efficacy and empathy to defending.

1.2.4 Do contextual factors add to our understanding about defending?

Besides personal and interpersonal factors, characteristics of children's close environment (e.g., classroom) influence their behaviors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; see also Rodkin & Gest, 2011; Rodkin & Hodges, 2003; Swearer & Espelage, 2004). Indeed, recent studies (Kärnä et al., 2010; Pozzoli, Gini, & Vieno, 2012; Salmivalli & Voeten 2004; Salmivalli et al., 2011) have shown that defending behaviors vary across classrooms. Thus, despite children's personal characteristics, it is plausible that the characteristics of the group define, at least partly, whether defending victimized peers are allowed within a specific group or whether it contains a social risk which is too costly to take. However, as compared to children's personal characteristics, much less attention has been paid to the contextual factors, for example, classroom characteristics that may influence to defending behavior.

When thinking of potential classroom level characteristics that might help to account for such differences, descriptive norms are likely candidates. Descriptive norms refer to behaviors that are typical in a classroom. Their influence has been shown for other behaviors such as aggression. For example, there is evidence that aggregate levels of aggression predict increases in individual students' aggressive behavior and victimization over and above individual level predictors (gender, prior levels of aggression and prosocial behavior, Mercerer, McMillen, & DeRosier, 2009; Thomas, Bierman, Powers, & The Conduct Problems research Group, 2011). Accordingly, Salmivalli and colleagues (2011) showed that defending was less common in classrooms in which the overall level of bullying was high. There is evidence, however, that descriptive norms of defending and positive attitudes toward victims are even better predictors

of defending behavior than descriptive norms about bullying (Pozzoli et al., 2012).

It has been suggested recently that what is influential in determining the norms guiding students' behavior in bullying situations is not the overall level of bullying in the classroom, but the behavior of the popular students (Dijkstra, Lindenberg and Veenstra, 2008). Although bullying behaviors are likely to be related to high perceived popularity (Caravita et al., 2009; Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004; Cillessen & Rose, 2005; Lease, et al., 2002; Newcomb, et al., 1993; Parkhurst & Hopmeyer, 1998; Sandstrom & Cillessen, 2006), classrooms differ in the strength of such association. Classroom norms may be set by just a few popular students, and when their behavior is directed towards negative behaviors (i.e., bullying), positive behaviors (i.e., defending) may be hindered. Thus, in Study IV, we measured norms in two ways; the overall level of bullying in the classroom (i.e., descriptive norm about bullying) and the association between bullying and perceived popularity in the classroom (i.e., social prestige norm about bullying). We anticipated that probullying norms would hinder students from defending their victimized classmates. More specifically, we expected that students are unlikely to defend their victimized peers in classrooms where bullies are perceived as popular and/or the overall level of bullying is high.

In addition to norms defined through actual behaviors, collective perceptions may influence defending behaviors. For example, utilizing multilevel modeling, Salmivalli and Voeten (2004) tested the effects of students' beliefs about the appropriateness of bullying-related behaviors on defending behavior, and concluded that defending was influenced by collective perceptions. In addition to these specific perceptions of the collective's response to bullying, also sense of connectedness among students may be adequate to boost defending (McEvoy & Welker, 2000; Carlo, Fabes, Laible, & Kupanoff, 1999). If students feel they are a close-knit community, they are more likely to behave in altruistic ways. Specifically, when students feel close to one another, they are more likely to risk their own safety or reputation as they defend a victim.

In addition to classmates, teachers have an important role in influencing which behaviors are accepted and encouraged in the school class (e.g., Farmer, Lines, & Hamm, 2011; Rodkin

& Gest, 2011). In school classes in which homeroom teachers disapprove bullying and also act upon those beliefs, victimization is less common and students incline to intervene on behalf of the victim more often than in those classrooms in which teachers report to be more tolerant to bullying (e.g., Hektner & Swenson, 2012). In the Study IV, we examined students' understanding of their teachers' reactions to bullying instead of teachers' evaluation of their own beliefs and behaviors, inasmuch as it is these subjective views that are more likely to affect student behavior (see Brok, Bergen, Stahl, & Brekelmans, 2004). In terms of collective perceptions, we expected defending behavior to be more common in the classrooms where students collectively felt like getting along with each other and perceived their teacher to be effective in dealing with bullying situations.

Furthermore, unlike norms, which can be represented only on the level of collective, perceptions may operate simultaneously on the level of an individual and the level of collective (e.g., Brok, Bregelmans, & Wubbels, 2007; Lüdtke, Robitzh, Trautwein, & Kunter, 2009; Waters, Cross, & Shaw, 2010). In other words, students who feel connected to their classmates or have personal beliefs of their teacher's antibullying actions (Rigby & Bagshaw, 2003) might be more likely to defend victimized classmates. At the same time, shared perceptions or beliefs may also predict classroom differences, inasmuch as defending should be promoted in classrooms where students perceive their teachers to have antibullying attitudes and be efficacious at tackling bullying. Similarly, shared perceptions of classmate connectedness ought to increase the likelihood of standing up for the victimized peers (even after controlling for individual perceptions) and thus help account for classroom differences. Thus, in Study IV we estimated associations between the two kinds of perceptions and defending at the individual as well as classroom level.

2. AIMS OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this thesis was to investigate the effects of intrapersonal (self-efficacy, outcome expectations, outcome values, and affective empathy) and interpersonal (peer preference and perceived popularity) personal factors on defending victimized peers. We also investigated possible contextual level (norms and collective perceptions) effects on defending behavior.

The specific questions were:

1. Are self-efficacy beliefs for defending and outcome expectations for such behaviors related to bystander behaviors (i.e., defending and remaining passive and reinforcing the bully)? (Study I)
2. Are specific outcome expectations and values (i.e., a decrease in bullying, the victim feeling better, children's own status improving) related to bystander behaviors (i.e., defending, remaining passive, and reinforcing the bully) even after controlling for the effect of self-efficacy beliefs? Is the effect of outcome expectations on these behaviors further moderated by the value students place on such outcomes? (Study II)
3. Are self-efficacy beliefs and affective empathy positively related to defending? Are both social preference and perceived popularity related to defending? Do social status variables moderate the association between self-efficacy and defending, as well as between affective empathy and defending? (Study III)
4. Are the students in the classrooms where the levels of bullying are high and in the classrooms where bullying is positively related to perceived popularity, less likely to engage in defending behavior? Is defending typical in classrooms where children feel connected to each other and their perceptions of teachers' antibullying attitudes and actions are positive? (Study IV)

3. METHOD

Two separate datasets were used for this thesis. The data for studies I and III were drawn from the Kaarina Cohort Study consisting of fourth and eighth graders from a small-sized town (approximately 20,000 inhabitants) in Southwest Finland. Data for studies II and IV were drawn from the randomized controlled trial (RCT) evaluating the effects of the KiVa antibullying program. For the purpose of the thesis, I used the pretest data collected in May, 2007.

3.1 Procedures

3.1.1 Procedures of Study I and III

For Studies I and III, students responded to pen-and-paper questionnaires during regular school hours. The confidentiality of the questionnaires was emphasized to the students, and they were advised to contact school personnel (i.e., teacher, principal, school nurse, or school psychologist) if the questionnaires resulted in any negative feelings for them. The order of questionnaires was counterbalanced across classrooms so that the order of presentation would not have any systematic effect on the results. Consistent with the Finnish Human Subjects Protection regulations of the time, passive parental consent procedures were used. Parents received an information letter from the investigators that explained the goals of the study and the procedures involved, including the phone number of the principal investigator of the project (Christina Salmivalli). Parents were specifically instructed to sign a form letting the teacher know whether they wished their child not to take part in the study. Altogether, 49 students (8.7%) did not receive parental consent and were excluded from the analysis.

3.1.2 Procedures of Study II and IV

The data for Studies II and IV were collected through internet-based questionnaires in May, 2007. Testing sessions were held during regular school hours at computer labs, under the supervision of teachers who were given detailed instructions concerning the procedure two weeks prior to the data collection. If teachers had any questions or concerns, they could obtain support via phone or e-mail. At the beginning of the testing session, the term bullying was defined to the

students. The definition included three main components of bullying: intent to harm, chronicity, and imbalance of power (see e.g., Olweus, 1999). Teachers read the definition out loud and students were then asked to read the same definition from their computer screens. Additionally, a shortened version of the definition (i.e., “It is bullying, when a person is repeatedly made to feel bad on purpose”) always appeared on the upper part of the computer screen when students responded to bullying-related questions (i.e., Participant Role Questionnaire). The order of the questionnaires as well as the order of the items within questionnaires was randomized. To recruit the children, their parents were sent information letters including an active consent form (i.e., a form in which the parent or guardian had to mark whether the child is allowed to participate in the data collection). This form was first returned to the homeroom teachers, who, in turn, sent it to the KiVa staff responsible for recording parental permission. A total of 7,491 students (90.9% of the target sample) received active consent to participate in the study. In the analysis, we excluded children who did not have an active consent (9.1%) to participate.

3.2 Participants

An overview of participants for each study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of the sample characteristics

	Study I	Study II	Study III	Study IV
Project	Kaarina Cohort Study	KiVa antibullying Project	Kaarina Cohort Study	KiVa antibullying Project
Grade(s)	4; 8	3–5	4; 8	3–5
Age	M (4 th grade) = 10.6 M (8 th grade) = 14.6	M = 11.2	M (4 th grade) = 10.6 M (8 th grade) = 14.6	M = 11.2
Sex	271 girls 240 boys	3,232 girls 3,165 boys	257 girls 232 boys	3,259 girls 3,391 boys
N (students)	511	6,379	489	6,650
Time	February 2006	May 2007	February 2006	May 2007

3.2.1 Participants of Study I and III

For Studies I and III we initially targeted all fourth- and eighth-grade students ($N = 563$) from a small town in Southwest Finland. All students who were evaluated by less than five classmates were excluded from analyses including peer reports. Consequently, the sample size was 481 for Study I and 461 for Study III. We chose to include two age groups in these studies, representing middle childhood (fourth grade) and adolescence (eighth grade). The comparison of these age groups provides an interesting contrast, as both empathy and cognitive abilities tend to increase with age (e.g., Eisenberg, 2003; Hoffman, 2000), whereas defending behavior becomes less common when students grow older (Menesini et al., 2003; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004).

3.2.2 Participants of Study II and IV

The target sample for Studies II and IV included a total of 8,237 students from grades 3–5 from all provinces of mainland Finland. In the analysis, we excluded children who had not filled out the questionnaires used in the studies. However, missing values were handled through creating mean scores even if the participant had some missing data on some of the items of the subscales. To improve the reliability of the peer reports, we also excluded the data for the students whose class size was smaller than five (Studies II and IV), and students in classes where less than 60% of the students participated in the data collection (Study II).

3.3 Measures

An overview of peer report measures used is presented in Table 2 and an overview of self report measures used is presented in Table 3.

3.3.1 Measures of Study I

Defending behavior, remaining passive (i.e., staying outside), and *reinforcing the bully* were measured by the Participant Role Questionnaire (PRQ) (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). The participants were provided with a class roster and asked to mark (with an “X”) an unlimited number of their same-sex classmates who engaged in the behaviors described in each item. The total number of nominations received by each student for each item was summed up and divided by the number of nominators. Scale scores were created by averaging across the three

items, resulting in a final score that ranged from 0 to 1. Internal consistencies (Chronbach's alphas) for the scales ranged from .75 to .89.

Self reports were used to measure *self-efficacy for defending* ($\alpha = .65$) and *outcome expectations*. For outcome expectations two scales were created. *Positive outcome expectations for defending* were assessed by items measuring expectations regarding defending a victimized classmate that result in beneficial outcomes. The scale included expectations concerning decrease in bullying, the victim feeling better, and one's social status improving as a result of defending. Similarly, *negative outcome expectations for defending* included items measuring anticipation of detrimental consequences as a result of defending. Chronbach's alphas were .82 and .84 for *positive* and *negative outcome expectations*, respectively.

Table 2. Overview of peer report measures

Measure	Sample item
Participant roles in bullying situations (PRQ)	
Defender scale ^{1,2,3,4}	"Tries to make the others to stop bullying."
Reinforcer scale ^{1,2}	"Laughs along"
Remaining passive scale ^{1,2}	"Doesn't take sides with anyone"
Bully scale ⁴	"Starts bullying"
Social status	
Most liked ³	"Which ones [of your classmates] do you like the most?"
Least liked ³	"Which ones [of your classmates] do you like the least?"
Most popular ^{3,4}	"Who are the most popular [students] in your class?"
Least popular ³	"Who are the least popular [students] in your class?"

Note. 1 used in Study I; 2 used in Study II ; 3 used in Study III; 4 used in Study IV.

Table 3. Overview of self report measures

Empathy		
Cognitive component ³	<i>"I'm able to recognize, before many other children, that other people's feelings have changed"</i>	0 = never 3 = always
Affective component ³	<i>"If someone I care about is sad, I feel sad as well"</i>	0 = never 3 = always
Cognitive towards the victim of bullying ⁴	<i>"I can understand how the bullied student must feel"</i>	0 = never true 3 = always true
Affective towards the victim of bullying ⁴	<i>"When the bullied student is sad, I also feel sad"</i>	0 = never true 3 = always true
Social cognitions		
Self-efficacy for defending ^{1,2,3,4}	<i>"Trying to make the others stop the bullying would be... for me"</i>	0 = very easy 3 = very difficult (reverse coded)
Outcome expectations for defending		
Bullying decreasing ^{1,2}	<i>"If you would try make the others to stop bullying it would end or decrease bullying"</i>	0 = not likely at all 3 = very likely
Victim feeling better ^{1,2}	<i>"If you would try make the others to stop bullying it would make the bullied person feel better"</i>	0 = not likely at all 3 = very likely
One's social status improving ^{1,2}	<i>"If you would try make the others to stop bullying it would make the others think highly of you"</i>	0 = not likely at all 3 = very likely (negative ones reverse coded in Study 2)
Outcome values for defending		
Bullying decreasing ²	<i>"The decrease of bullying is to me"</i>	0 = not important at all 3 = very important
Victim feeling better ²	<i>"The victim of bullying not being sad is to me"</i>	0 = not important at all 3 = very important
One's social status improving ²	<i>"Me being thought highly of is to me"</i>	0 = not important at all 3 = very important
Perceptions		
Connectedness to classmates ⁴	<i>"I feel it is easy to get along with my classmates"</i>	0 = completely disagree 4 = completely agree
Teacher's reactions to bullying ⁴	<i>"How much can the teacher do in order to decrease bullying?"</i>	0 = nothing 4 = very much

Note. 1 used in Study I; 2 used in Study II ; 3 used in Study III; 4 used in Study IV; *Items include both positive and negative expectations; negative expectations reverse-coded.

3.3.2 Measures of Study II

Peer reports (PRQ; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004) were used to measure *defending behavior* ($\alpha = .92$), *remaining passive* ($\alpha = .80$), and *reinforcing the bully* ($\alpha = .85$). Scales were created in a similar way to Study I.

Self reports were used to measure *self-efficacy* ($\alpha = .65$), *outcome expectations*, and *outcome values for defending*. To measure outcome expectations, three scales were formed. Each of the scales included both positive and negative consequences for defending. These scales were: *expecting that bullying decreases* ($\alpha = .75$); *expecting that the victim feels better* ($\alpha = .78$); and *expecting that one's own status improves* ($\alpha = .70$). Similarly, three scales were created to measure outcome values for defending. These scales resembled those of the outcome expectations. Chronbach's alphas were .70; .78; .68 for *valuing a decrease in bullying*; *the victim feeling better*; and *one's status improving*, respectively.

3.3.3 Measures of Study III

In this study peer reports were used to measure defending behavior and social status. The participant Role Questionnaire (PRQ) (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004) was used to measure *defending behavior* ($\alpha = .89$). This scale was created in a similar way to Study I. For *social preference*, participants viewed again a roster with names of their same-sex classmates and nominated up to three peers they (a) liked the most, and (b) liked the least. The number of nominations received for each item was tallied for each child and divided by the number of nominators. A *social preference score* was then calculated by subtracting the proportion of like-least nominations received from the proportion of like-most nominations received (Coie, Dodge, & Coppotelli, 1982). Thus, social preference scores ranged from -1 to 1 . To assess perceived popularity, participants nominated up to three same-sex classmates they perceived to be (a) most popular, and (b) least popular. The number of nominations for each item was, again, tallied for each child and divided by the number of nominators. Perceived popularity was calculated by subtracting the proportion of the least popular nominations received from the proportion of the most popular nominations received, resulting in a score ranging from -1 to 1 .

Self reports were used for *self-efficacy for defending* ($\alpha = .65$) and *empathy*. Chronbach's

alphas were .71 and .80 for *cognitive* and *affective empathy*, respectively.

3.3.4 Measures of Study IV

In this study, peer reports were used to measure defending and bullying behavior and perceived popularity. Again the Participant Role Questionnaire (PRQ) (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004) was used to measure *defending* ($\alpha = .92$) and *bullying behavior* ($\alpha = .91$) and scales were created in a similar way to Study I. To assess *perceived popularity*, participants nominated up to three classmates they perceived as most popular. For each student, the number of nominations was tallied and divided by the number of nominators. Scores could vary from 0 to 1.

Self reports were used to measure *self-efficacy beliefs for defending behavior* ($\alpha = .69$), *affective* and *cognitive empathy towards victim of bullying* (alphas = .85 and .75, respectively), *connectedness to classmates* ($\alpha = .81$), and *perceptions of teacher's reactions to bullying* ($\alpha = .63$).

We further created four contextual variables for the purposes of this study. First, a *classroom level indicator of bullying* was derived by averaging individual bullying scores for each classroom (scores could vary between 0 and 1). Second, we computed a *correlation between bullying and popularity* for each classroom (correlations could vary from -1 to 1). In addition, we created a *connectedness index* by aggregating individual scores on the *connectedness to classmates* measure in each classroom. Finally, a similar procedure was done to create a classroom measure of *perceptions of teacher's reactions to bullying*.

3.4 Statistical analyses

For the main analyses of Studies I, II, and III, we conducted hierarchical linear regression analyses using SPSS software. When testing interactions (Studies II and III), all continuous variables were centered by standardizing (Aiken & West, 1991) across the participants. In Study II, interaction terms were added to equations simultaneously and in Study III one by one. The nature of significant interactions was examined following the procedure suggested by Aiken and West (1991). Namely, the association between the predictor and the outcome variable was computed at three levels (-1 , 0 , and $+1$ *SD*) of the moderator.

In Study IV, we used multilevel modeling (Mplus 6.1; Muthen & Muthen, 1998) to disentangle contextual (classroom level) effects and individual (student level) effects. All covariates were grand-mean centered. By grand-mean centering individual level covariates, classroom level associations were estimated after controlling for the effects of these variables (i.e., when predicting between-classroom differences in defending, classrooms have been equated with regard to student level variables; see Enders & Tofghi, 2007).

4. OVERVIEW OF ORIGINAL ARTICLES

STUDY I

Pöyhönen V. & Salmivalli C. (2008). New directions in research and practice addressing bullying: focus on defending behavior. In Pepler D. & Craig W. (eds.), *Understanding and addressing bullying: An international perspective, PREVNet Series, vol 1.* (pp. 26–43). Bloomington, Indiana.

In this study, we examined social cognitive factors behind different bystander responses in bullying situations. More specifically, we were interested in testing whether cognitions (self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations) guide children's behavioral choices (defending the victim, staying outside bullying situations, reinforcing the bully) when someone is being bullied. We also explored gender and age differences regarding these cognitions.

The final sample included 511 students (271 girls and 240 boys) from the fourth ($M_{age} = 10.6$ years, $n = 293$) and eighth grades ($M_{age} = 14.6$ years, $n = 218$). We excluded students who were evaluated by less than five classmates from all the analyses involving peer reports. Consequently, the sample size in these analyses was 481. In this study, we formed two scales to measure outcome expectations (i.e., positive outcome expectations for defending and negative outcome expectations for defending).

Overall, students expected more positive than negative consequences from defending the victim of bullying. However, a more detailed examination of outcome expectations revealed that the most negative expectations (being disliked and harassed) and the least positive ones (being respected) were expected for self. Compared to boys, girls felt more efficacious for defending the victim of bullying and also expected more positive outcomes as a result of defending. Also, younger students anticipated more positive outcomes from defending than older ones. The results also indicated that the more efficacious students felt for defending the victim, the more likely they were to do so. Students who tend to remain passive in the bullying situation, on the other hand, lacked self-efficacy for defending the victim, but did not anticipate

negative outcomes for defending. Furthermore, students who felt efficacious for defending the victim, but simultaneously expected negative consequences from doing so, were likely to reinforce the bully. Thus, based on our results, the two groups of children we may want to target in the interventions, are students who remain passive or reinforce the bully because they have different obstacles for defending.

STUDY II

Pöyhönen, V., Juvonen, J., & Salmivalli, C. (2012). Standing up for a victim, siding with the bully, or standing by? Bystander responses in bullying situations. *Social Development, 21*, 722–741.

In this study we examined children's self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and outcome values in relation to bystander responses in bullying situations. More specifically, we proposed that beyond the effect of self-efficacy, the decision to defend the victim of bullying vs. to remain passive vs. to reinforce the bully depends on the outcomes children expect from defending, and on the value they place on these outcomes. We investigated different outcome expectations (i.e., expectations of bullying declining vs. increasing; the victim feeling better vs. worse; and one's own social status improving vs. declining), as well as corresponding values (valuing bullying decreasing, the victim feeling better, and gaining social status) to ascertain whether particular expectations and values are more important than others in predicting different bystander responses. We also tested the interactive effects of specific outcome expectations and corresponding outcome values on bystander responses, while controlling for all the main effects in the model.

In this study we used the pretest data from the first phase of the evaluation of the KiVa antibullying program. The data were collected in May 2007 and the sample included 6,397 elementary school children (3,232 girls and 3,165 boys) from third, fourth, and fifth grades (mean ages 9–11 years).

Our results indicated that the motivational underpinnings for defending the victim, remaining passive, and reinforcing the bully do vary. Defending the victim was associated

with the expectation that the victim feels better as a result of the defending as well as valuing such an outcome. We also found a significant interactive effect indicating that the more important the victims' well-being is to children, the more likely they are to act upon their positive expectations and defend their victimized peers. Also students who expected defending to improve their status, tended to act upon these expectations and defend their victimized peers. Based on our results, students who remain passive in the situation have a set of relatively ambiguous expectations and values. For example, students who tended to remain passive did, indeed, expect the victim to feel better if defended (which might reflect their empathic skills). However, they did not believe that bullying would decrease as a result of defending. We also found a significant interaction indicating that students who expected that bullying would not decrease (or would even increase) as a result of attempts to defend, but valued a decrease in bullying (i.e., did not want it to increase), were likely to remain passive. If students expected nothing good to follow from defending the victim and did not care if the bullying decreased or whether the victim felt better, they were likely to reinforce the bully. Also students who expected defending to bring down their status, but also those who valued their status among the peers highly, were likely to reinforce the bully. Again, there was one significant interaction – the relationship between reinforcing the bully and expecting the bullying to increase, rather than decrease, was strengthened by *not* valuing a decrease in bullying (not caring whether that happened or not). Altogether our findings suggest that when aiming to encourage children to defend their victimized classmates, we should, along with self-efficacy, also target children's beliefs about the possible consequences of defending and the extent to which they value those outcomes.

STUDY III

Pöyhönen, V., Juvonen, J., & Salmivalli C. (2010). What does it take to stand up for the victim of Bullying? The interplay between personal and social factors. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 56, 143–163.

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the role of cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal factors in defending behavior. Specifically we examined whether children's and

adolescents' beliefs of their efficacy to defend their victimized peers, empathy, and social standing in the peer group (sociometric- and perceived popularity) influence their tendency to stand up for their victimized classmates. We also tested whether social status variables moderate the association between self-efficacy and defending as well as between affective empathy and defending.

The sample consisted of 489 students (257 girls and 232 boys) from grades four ($M = 10.6$ years, $n = 283$) and eight ($M = 14.6$ years, $n = 206$).

We found that defending behavior was positively associated with self-efficacy for defending, affective (but not cognitive) empathy, as well as high social status among peers. The results also partially supported our main hypotheses concerning the moderating role of social preference and perceived popularity. Only perceived popularity (not social preference) moderated the effect of self-efficacy on defending. This suggests that when a student is low on perceived popularity, self-efficacy is not associated with defending. Our results also indicated that the effect of affective empathy on defending behavior is moderated by students' social standing within the peer group. The interaction term between affective empathy and social preference was marginally significant, but the pattern of follow-up analyses was consistent with that found for perceived popularity. We also found significant grade differences in our study variables. As expected, eighth graders were less likely to defend victims than fourth graders, but scored higher on cognitive empathy than fourth graders. For affective empathy this was only true for girls. However, there were no grade differences in self-efficacy for defending. Our findings suggest that in addition to personal factors, children's social status within the peer group is an important determinant when it comes to the ability and courage to act upon emotions and cognitions.

STUDY IV

Pöyhönen, V., Juvonen, J., Peets, K., & Salmivalli, C. (2013). Defending victimized peers: A contextual analysis of classrooms norms and collective perceptions. Submitted for publication.

This study examined the degree to which bullying norms and collective perceptions (i.e., connectedness among the students and the teachers' ability to deal with bullying situations) can help account for classroom differences in students defending their victimized classmates. First, we examined whether defending is inhibited in classrooms where the levels of bullying were high (descriptive norm about bullying) and bullying was positively related to perceived popularity (social prestige norm about bullying). Second, we anticipated that defending is facilitated in classrooms where children perceived positive connectedness among the students (i.e., having good friends and getting along with classmates) and positive perceptions of the teachers' reactions to bullying. Our main focus was on classroom level characteristics – norms and perceptions. However, in order to test the independent role of contextual factors, we controlled for several theoretically relevant individual level covariates (i.e., age, gender, self-efficacy for defending, affective and cognitive empathy toward the victim, and perceived popularity). Furthermore, collective perceptions (i.e., connectedness among the students and perceptions of the teachers' reactions to bullying) were modeled at both the level of an individual and the level of group.

We used pretest data from the KiVa bullying intervention program. Data were collected in May, 2007 and the final sample included 6,650 third- to fifth-grade students (51% boys; $M_{age} = 11.2$ years) from 382 classrooms (average class size was 22.1 students).

We used multilevel modeling to take into account the interdependence of observations (students nested in classrooms). Defending served as the criterion variable. Age, gender, self-efficacy, affective and cognitive empathy, perceived popularity, connectedness to classmates and perceived teacher's reactions to bullying served as within (individual) level covariates. Mean age, class size, proportion of boys, aggregate levels of bullying, popularity-bullying correlation (capturing the prestige norm of bullying), connectedness among the students in the

classroom, and perceptions of teachers' reactions to bullying served as between (classroom) level covariates. First, our results showed that defending behavior was inhibited in classrooms where bullying was positively related to perceived popularity (social prestige norm about bullying), whereas aggregate levels of bullying (descriptive norm about bullying) were not related to defending. Second, the current findings further underscore that both individual as well as collective perceptions of classmate connectedness can facilitate defending behavior. We also found that defending was facilitated in classrooms where students shared positive perceptions of their teachers' reactions to bullying (i.e., they felt that the teacher tackled bullying and was efficacious at doing so). In sum, the findings of the current study demonstrate the power of contextual factors when accounting for defending behaviors. Our results suggest that over and above empathic feelings, sense of efficacy, and individual perceptions of the collective, group norms and collective perceptions are related to defending victimized peers. In school settings, classroom ethos affected by teachers (who are in the position to condemn and encourage specific actions) and peer group values deserve increased attention.

5. DISCUSSION

The aim of this thesis was to investigate intra- and interpersonal characteristics (e.g., social cognitions, empathy, and social status) as well as group level factors (e.g., norms) that may either enable the students to defend or prevent them from defending their victimized classmates. The results indicated that defending the victims of bullying is a complex phenomenon, that is influenced by a variety of individual level motivational characteristics, such as social cognitions and empathy (see e.g., Atkinson, 1964; Bandura, 1997, 2001; Batson, 1998; Hoffman, 2000 for theoretical considerations). Also, both perceived popularity and social preference play a role in defending, and our findings support the conceptualization that behavior results from the interplay between the intrapersonal characteristics of an individual child and the characteristics of their social-relational environment (see e.g., Ladd, 2003 for theoretical considerations). In line with social-ecological perspective of children's social behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; see also Rodkin & Gest, 2011; Rodkin & Hodges, 2003; Swearer & Espelage, 2004), our findings suggest that classroom context further influences students' defending behavior.

5.1 Defending investigated

5.1.1 *Importance of measuring specific cognitions*

We measured a set of cognitions, including self-efficacy for defending, outcome expectations for defending, and outcome values for defending (see e.g., Bandura, 1997, 2001). Our studies further support the main tenet of social cognitive learning theory (see e.g., Bandura, 1997, 2001) according to which the way children think influences their behavior in the relatively understudied behavioral domains of bystander behaviors in bullying situations, even when tested simultaneously. First of all, in all of the studies we found a positive link between self-efficacy and defending – the more efficacious students felt to defend the victim, the more likely they were to do so (Gini, Albiero et al., 2008). These findings differ from the results of other studies in which self-efficacy was operationalized in more general terms (e.g., Andreou & Metallidou, 2004). Based on our findings, when assessing self-efficacy, the domain-specific nature of the

construct (see e.g., Bandura, 1997, 2001) should be emphasized (i.e., to measure self-efficacy specifically to defending). In terms of defending behavior, an important part of the mechanism through which self-efficacy operates may be its influence on individuals' persistence when they face difficult tasks and challenges (see e.g., Bandura, 1997, 2001). As a strong sense of self-efficacy also reduces stress and heightens and sustains efforts in the face of failure (see e.g., Bandura, 1997), it is plausible that a student with a strong sense of self-efficacy to defend the victim of bullying is able to keep up the motivation to stand up for the victimized classmate even if the task is often challenging. Students with less efficacy to defend their victimized classmate, on the other hand, may shy away from this difficult task which they may view as a personal threat (see e.g., Bandura, 1997; Gini, Albiero et al., 2008). This assumption was only partly supported by our results. The results of Study I indicated that students who remain passive in the bullying situation lacked self-efficacy to defend the victim. Results of Study II did not, however, replicate this finding. As we did not test interactions between age and study constructs in Study I, it is possible that the negative effect of self-efficacy on remaining passive fails to extend beyond middle-childhood.

In addition to self-efficacy we investigated the role of outcome expectations (Studies I and II) and outcome values (Study II) in defending and other bystander behaviors. In Study I, we used a somewhat general measure of outcome expectations. That is, we measured outcome expectations specifically for defending, but our measure only included positive (i.e., defending will result in positive things) and negative (i.e., defending will result in negative things) outcome expectations for defending. In this study, we did not find a link between outcome expectations and defending. It is possible that this was due to the relatively general measure of outcome expectations. Thus, in Study II, we assessed outcome expectations in a more specific way. Leaning on the previous literature on possible consequences of defending (see e.g., Juvonen & Galván, 2008; O'Connell et al., 1999; Sainio et al., 2011; Salmivalli et al., 2011; Slee, 1994), we measured outcomes related to bullying decreasing, the victim's plight being alleviated, and children's own status improving as a result of defending. In Study II, we also included outcome values, which were measured accordingly. Also the interactions between expectations and values were tested.

When measured this way, outcome expectations and values do add to our understanding of defending behavior even when controlling for the effect of self-efficacy beliefs (Williams, 2010). Defending the victim of bullying was associated with the expectation that the victim feels better as a result of defending as well as valuing such an outcome. We also found a significant interactive effect indicating that the more important victims' well-being is to children, the more likely they are to act upon their positive expectations and defend their victimized peers. Moreover, students who expected defending to improve their status tended to act upon these expectations and defend their victimized peers. This is notable as it has been suggested that students may be prevented from defending as a result of it influencing their status negatively (Juvonen & Galván, 2008). Our results, however, suggest that *if* students expect their status to improve as a result of defending, they are more likely to support their victimized classmates.

Based on our results, students who tend to remain passive in bullying situations do so guided by a set of relatively ambiguous outcome expectations and values. Again, the results also pointed out the importance of measuring outcome expectations (and values) in a more specific way. In Study I we found that, in general, students who tend to remain passive in bullying situations do not anticipate negative outcomes from defending. The results of Study II further clarified this finding by indicating that students who tended to remain passive did, indeed, expect some positive consequences from defending (i.e., expected the victim to feel better if defended), but did not believe that bullying would decrease as a result of defending. This finding may indicate that those who remain passive somehow lack broader confidence that defending will make a difference. Along the same line, we found a significant interaction indicating that students who expected that bullying would not decrease (or would even increase) as a result of attempts to defend, but valued bullying decreasing (i.e., did not want it to increase), were likely to remain passive.

The effect of the outcome expectations and values on reinforcing the bully was rather straightforward; If students expected nothing good to follow from defending the victim and did not care if the bullying decreased or the victim felt better, they were likely to reinforce the bully. Also students who expected defending to bring down their status, but at the same time

highly valued their status, were likely to reinforce the bully. It is possible that some students are drawn to popular bullies in the hope of becoming popular themselves (Juvonen & Ho, 2008; Witvliet, Olthof, Hoeksma, Smits, Koot, & Goossens, 2010). Again, there was one significant interaction; the relationship between reinforcing the bully and expecting the bullying to increase, rather than decrease, was strengthened by *not* valuing the bullying decreasing (not caring whether that happened or not).

As outcome expectations mainly develop as a result of successes or failures of formerly enacted behaviors (Bandura, 1997), it is possible that students who remain passive in the situation have succeeded in their attempts to comfort the victim but failed in making bullying stop, whereas students who tend to defend the victim have succeeded in all their attempts, resulting in firm positive expectations for that behavior. Similarly, it is possible that students who reinforce the bully have not succeeded in their former attempts to defend the victim, but have benefited from their aggressive acts (Perry et al., 1986; cf. Perry et al., 1990).

To summarize, our results suggest that social cognitions should be measured more specifically. Importantly, outcome expectations and values predicted variance in behaviors beyond the effects of self-efficacy, indicating that they have additive value when predicting bystander responses to bullying. Different bystander reactions are indeed, based on different cognitions. Defending is characterized by a set of encouraging social cognitions. That is, students who tend to defend the victim believe in their ability to do so, believe that defending does make a positive difference, and place a high value on the positive outcomes of defending.

5.1.2 Global affective empathy may not be enough

It was assumed, that it would be important to distinguish between affective and cognitive empathy when investigating the role of empathy in defending behavior (Caravita et al., 2009). Based on the findings of Study III, affective empathy was positively associated with defending behavior, but it should be noted that when controlling for the effect of cognitive empathy this association reached only marginal significance. However, cognitive empathy was never related to defending behavior. This finding is in line with Caravita and colleagues' (2009) finding and supports the view that affective and cognitive components of empathy are separate constructs

with distinct correlates (Davis, 1983; Davis, Luce, & Kraus, 1994). Feeling another person's emotion is more likely to promote defending the victim of bullying (i.e., positive behaviors towards others) than cognitive understanding of other person's feelings (see also Caravita et al., 2009). If we think of the construct of affective empathy more thoroughly, this is rather interesting. The affective empathy scale used in this study (Bonino, Lo Coco, & Tani, 1998; see also Caravita et al., 2009) includes reactions such as "seeing a friend crying makes me feel as if I am crying too" or "when somebody I care about is sad, I feel sad too" that may not invite external reactions. It has been suggested (see e.g. Hoffman 1990; 2000) that experiencing other person's emotions induces *empathic distress*, which, in turn, makes a person want to help the one in need. But why do feelings of, for example, sadness, result in standing up against the bully and defending the victim (active response) instead of drowning into that feeling (and the empathic distress experienced) and, perhaps withdrawing from the situation? Indeed, inaction may be explained by empathic over-arousal (Hoffman, 2000); Extremely salient distress cues can be so aversive that observers' empathic distress is transformed into an intense personal feelings of distress. This empathic over-arousal can move observers out of the empathic mode, cause them to be preoccupied with their own personal distress, and turn their attention away from the victim (to themselves) (Hoffman, 2000). On the other hand, affective empathy may be a more complex process than just mirroring (and experiencing) other person's emotions. If someone else (e.g., the bully) causes distress in the victim which causes empathic distress in the self, one's distress may transform into empathic anger (Hoffman, 2000), which, in turn, might promote more active responses, such as defending.

Furthermore, the actions caused by empathy do not happen independently from the social-relational environment. Empathic distress can also be reduced by other processes than active helping of the victim. For example, a bystander may blame the victim for the situation, which may cause a bystander to withdraw from the situation (Hoffman 1990, 2000). Thus, it is plausible that affective empathy is not enough to promote defending behavior, and variables moderating this relation should be considered. Also, instead of viewing empathy as a general, trait-like characteristic, we should acknowledge that the context in which empathy is experienced as well as the target of the empathic emotions may matter (MacEvoy & Leff, 2012). Accordingly,

in Study IV we measured a more specific type of empathy, that is, affective empathy towards the victim of bullying. Even after controlling for the effect of cognitive empathy towards the victim of bullying, this more specific type of empathy was the strongest intrapersonal factor promoting defending behavior. This finding supports the idea that in addition to separating affective and cognitive components of empathy, we should aim to improve our empathy measures to take into account the context in which empathy is experienced, for instance, by defining the target of empathetic emotions (MacEvoy & Leff, 2012).

5.1.3 Importance of social status

In line with findings of Caravita and colleagues (2009), Study III indicated that both social preference and perceived popularity are positively associated with defending behavior. Both types of statuses may be needed to support the victim of bullying. Social preference may be needed to foster empathic and supportive interactions, whereas perceived popularity may enable students to achieve their goals (in this case to defend and support the victimized student) in the peer group (Cillessen, 2009). Perhaps the most intriguing finding of Study III was that the effect of both self-efficacy and affective empathy were moderated by social status variables. Out of the two social status variables, the role of perceived popularity in moderating individual variables was clearer than the role of social preference. Perceived popularity interacted significantly with both affective empathy and self-efficacy, indicating that either feeling efficacious at defending the victim or feeling the other person's emotion is not enough to spur defending. Rather, the student must be perceived popular among his/her classmates in order to act (i.e., defend) upon these cognitions or emotions. Students who bully others may be popular, dominant and central members of their peer group (Caravita et al., 2009; Lease et al., 2002; Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2006). It might be, that a good social standing (i.e., perceived popularity) is needed to oppose their behavior by defending the victim of bullying. Perceived popularity may also protect the students from the possible risk of becoming the next victim and from the need to emulate the bullies' behavior (Juvonen & Galván, 2008). Or, if viewed from a more positive side, it is possible that those students who are perceived as popular among their peers are also more supported by their peers. When these students act on behalf of their victimized classmates they can count on their peers to approve and perhaps even follow their actions.

5.1.4 Characteristics of the school class matter also

Study IV was designed to examine contextual factors (norms and collective perceptions) that, over and above the individual characteristics of the defenders, either enable children to support or inhibit them from supporting their victimized classmates. Consistent with previous social-ecological perspective of children's social behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; see also Rodkin & Gest, 2011; Rodkin & Hodges, 2003; Swearer & Espelage, 2004), our findings suggest that the classroom context plays an important role in influencing the students' defending behavior. More specifically, the probability of defending can be increased or decreased depending on the social power assigned to the bullies as well as collective perceptions of connectedness among the students and the teachers' reactions to bullying.

First, our results showed that defending behavior was inhibited in classrooms where bullying was positively related to perceived popularity (social prestige norm about bullying), whereas aggregate levels of bullying (descriptive norm about bullying) were not related to defending. Our results are in line with previous findings by showing that the behavior displayed by popular students is more influential than the overall behavioral norm in the group (Dijkstra et al., 2008). These findings suggest that students do not equally observe the behavior of all classmates, but are influenced by the behavior of their popular peers. The distinction between these two types of norms (descriptive norm about bullying vs. social prestige norm about bullying) might further clarify the results concerning the impact of norms on children's social behavior (e.g., Henry, Guerra, Huesmann, Tolan, Van Acker, & Eron, 2000; Mercerer et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011). Our results suggest that standing up for a victim may be particularly challenging in classrooms where bullying is associated with a high status (Dijkstra et al., 2008). It is plausible that in classrooms where bullies are popular, defending behavior becomes particularly risky. In other words, although bystanders may feel for the victim, they may not defend their victimized classmates in order to protect their own status (see e.g., Juvonen & Galván, 2008). Moreover, when bullying is enacted by popular students, it may become instrumental for achieving a valued goal of a high social status and thereby encourage modeling or emulating bullying behaviors (Dijkstra, Cillessen, Lindenberg, & Veenstra, 2010; Juvonen & Ho, 2008; Olthof & Goossens, 2008). In those types of settings defending might be perceived to

go against (or challenge) the power hierarchy and the prestige values of the collective.

Second, the current findings further underscore that both individual as well as collective perceptions of classmate connectedness can facilitate defending behavior. The classroom-level effect of perceptions means that if we compare two students who perceive to get along with others equally well, the student who attends the classroom with greater perceived connectedness is more likely to engage in defending behavior than the student who attends the classroom where children are less connected to each other. Thus, connectedness among all the students in the classroom creates a safe context that enables students to stand up for their victimized classmates. It is also possible that when students feel connected to each other, defending behavior is less risky. In classrooms characterized by positive and trusting relationships, students have positive means to connect to each other and they do not need to create cohesion and connectedness within the group by taking part in negative behaviors, such as bullying (see e.g., Garandeau & Cillessen, 2006; Farmer, Petrin, Robertson, Eraser, Hall, Day, & Dadisman, 2010; Juvonen & Galván, 2008), but they can continue maintaining and further establishing connectedness with more prosocial means.

We also found that defending was facilitated in classrooms where students shared positive perceptions of their teachers' reactions to bullying (i.e., they felt that the teacher tackled bullying and was efficacious at doing so). Interestingly, individual perceptions of the teacher's reactions to bullying were not associated with defending behavior after considering collective perceptions. These findings imply, that it is not enough for a single student to have confidence in their teacher handling bullying incidents. The fact that collective perceptions matter more than individual beliefs may not be so surprising. Perceptions that are shared among most of the classmates are likely to reflect a classroom ethos or climate (similar to what was discussed about connectedness) where bullying is less tolerated and intervening is less risky for students. These may have developed via teachers' consistent enforcement of antibullying actions (see a review by Durlak & DuPre, 2008).

5.2 Strengths

This thesis was guided by several theoretical frameworks including social cognitive learning theory (e.g., Bandura, 1997, 2001), the expectancy-value framework (e.g., Atkinson, 1964; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992) as well as the literature emphasizing the importance of empathy in motivating behaviors (e.g., Hoffman, 1990, 2000). Furthermore, both the child-by-environment perspective (e.g., Hodges et al., 1997; Ladd, 2003) and the social-ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; see also Rodkin & Gest, 2011; Rodkin & Hodges, 2003; Swearer & Espelage, 2004) influenced this research. Accordingly, we examined a variety of intra- and interpersonal factors, as well as factors in children's close environment (i.e., school class) in order to thoroughly investigate the multiple factors that may either enable the students to defend or prevent them from defending their victimized classmates. In terms of intrapersonal factors, we simultaneously tested divergent social cognitions as well as affective and cognitive empathy, in order to disentangle their independent effects. Our studies were also the first attempts to measure cognitions (and empathy, Study IV) specifically related to defending behavior. Thus, this thesis contributes to the existing literature by underlining the importance of domain-specificity when measuring cognitions. Additionally, following the ideas of child-by-environment perspectives (e.g., Hodges et al., 1997, Ladd, 2003) is a rather novel approach. As there is a strong emphasis on status-related processes that define and maintain bullying (e.g., Salmivalli & Peets, 2008; Juvonen & Galván, 2008), it is an important contribution to highlight similar processes defining defending behavior, a counterbalance to bullying. Moreover, the result that the students' personal characteristics are indeed moderated by their standing in the peer group may further clarify the ambiguous findings of former studies. Furthermore, taking advantage of multilevel modeling and pointing out the role of status-related processes in inhibiting defending at the classroom level is a clear contribution. Also, instead of relying on self reported bystander responses to typical bullying incidents (which are prone to social desirability effects), peer nomination methods were used to obtain data throughout the studies.

5.3 Limitations

There are also limitations. First, we did not use longitudinal data in this thesis, so we cannot

draw any conclusions concerning the direction of effects. For instance, even though a major tenet of social cognitive learning theory is that cognitions guide behaviors, the opposite can also be true (e.g., self-efficacy also develops through mastery experiences; Bandura, 1997). For example, it is possible that children who successfully defend victims will evidence consequential increases in their perceived efficacy to defend their victimized peers. Likewise, instead of enabling defending behavior, social standing in the peer group could improve as a result of defending behavior. Second, given that our main goal was to understand which factors predict defending, we included a relatively narrow set of relevant variables in this study. That is, we included social cognitions that were clearly in relation to defending. This might be one reason why we found a set of rather ambiguous cognitions which predicted remaining passive in the bullying situation. Third, even though we used a measure in study IV that is more specific when defining the target of empathic emotions (cf. assessing more general, perhaps trait-like empathy), we still used a general statement (e.g., “target of bullying”), instead of naming the individual target (see e.g., Peets, Hodges, & Salmivalli, 2008). Fourth, although we interpreted inconsistent findings for the role of self-efficacy in remaining passive and reinforcing the bully as possibly due to age differences in the samples, firmer conclusions will require tests of age moderation within one sample with a broader range of ages.

5.4 Implications

5.4.1 Future directions in research

An important focus for future studies will be to assess defending behavior in a more nuanced way. In each of the studies in this thesis, defending behavior was measured through three peer report items, including both direct and indirect forms of defending. Even though this shorter version of the Participant Role Questionnaire (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004) is a reliable and valid way to assess defending (and other bystander behaviors), it will be important to test whether direct and indirect forms of defending share the same antecedents or whether they may have distinct underlying processes. For example, it is possible that perceived popularity is needed only when taking a direct stand to stop bullying, whereas characteristics such as empathy may be enough to trigger more discrete forms of defending (e.g., comforting the victim).

It will also be important to utilize longitudinal data and to investigate intra- and interpersonal as well as group level factors that were included in this thesis to further clarify the mechanisms underlying defending. For example, Barchia and Bussey (2011) found that, among adolescents, defending-related self-efficacy did not predict defending behavior over time (eight months). Future studies could also include a wider scope of cognitions so that, for example, expected consequences of multiple roles (e.g., bullying, reinforcing the bully, passive bystanding, and defending) could be tested simultaneously. Inclusion of factors which inhibit defending behavior, such as the fear of becoming the next victim (Juvonen & Galván, 2008; Slee, 1994), is also needed in order to clarify motives that underlie remaining passive in the situation.

5.4.2 Implications for antibullying interventions

What can be suggested for antibullying interventions in the light of these findings? Based on our results, I argue that guiding children and adolescents towards general prosocial behavior is not enough to engage students to defend their victimized peers. Rather, interventions should be specifically targeted to bullying and in particular bystander behavior (see also Polanin, Espelage, Pigott, 2012 for a recent meta-analysis). First, antibullying interventions should, indeed, include universal actions (i.e., activities that target the whole school class). This can be achieved through student lessons (see e.g., Hawkins et al., 2001; Pepler, Craig, & O'Connell, 2010; Salmivalli, Kärnä, & Poskiparta, 2010). Also, doing activities (e.g., practicing safe strategies to support the victim) together as a group is likely to enhance a non-risky environment that facilitates defending behavior. Second, it is advisable to support social cognitions that enable defending perhaps through introducing to the students effective strategies for defending victimized students and role playing to enhance efficacy for doing so. Since the most influential source to develop efficacy toward a task is mastery experience (Bandura, 1997), students are likely to benefit from hands-on experience in practicing ways to defend through role-play exercises. We should also target children's beliefs about the possible consequences of defending and the extent to which they value those outcomes. Third, as affective empathy towards the victim seems to promote defending, it would also be an important target for intervention. One option could be to use interviews of former victims. Last, as both social preference and perceived popularity

are linked to defending, it will be important to aim to mobilize empathic, high status students to support their victimized classmates. Moreover, the notion that students who tend to defend their classmates are also perceived as popular might be an important message to children: being “cool” doesn’t have to mean putting others down, but quite the opposite; acting on behalf of others by helping and supporting them.

6. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX: THE ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

Chapter 2:

New Directions in Research and Practice Addressing Bullying: Focus on Defending Behaviour

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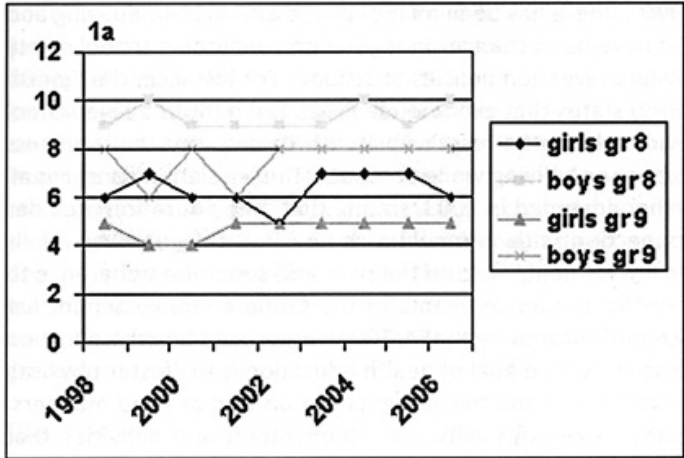
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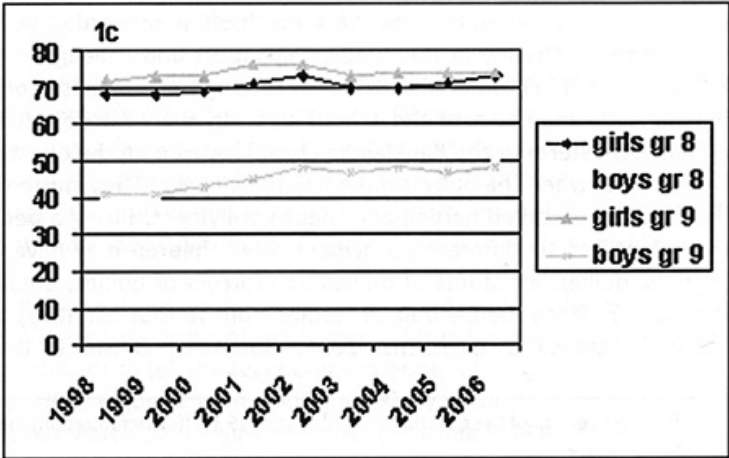
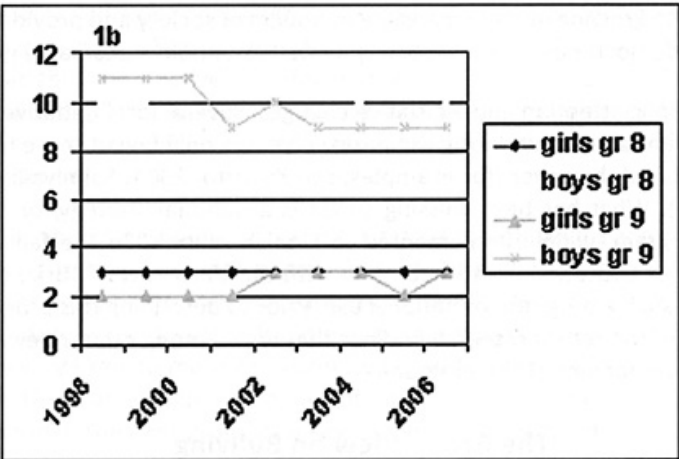
Background: Bullying in Finland

In Finland, approximately 5-15% of students are repeatedly victimized by their peers at school. Self-reported victimization is more frequent in primary than in secondary schools. The School Health Promotion Study is conducted each year in Finnish secondary schools by the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (www.stakes.fi). There are more than 75,000 respondents yearly. The results of the survey show that during the past ten years, there has been no change in the frequency of victimized students, at least at the secondary school level. Figures 1a-1c show the frequencies of students who report being victimized once a week or more, students who bully others once a week or more, and students who are never involved in bullying others. Although the frequencies of victimized students (1a) and those who bully others (1b) are very stable, we can see a slight increase in the frequency of students (especially boys) who report not being involved in bullying others at all (1c).

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Percentages of Finnish eighth- and ninth-graders who reported being bullied once a week or more often (1a), bullying others once a week or more often (1b), and of those “never” bullying others (1c) during 1998-2006.



Understanding and Addressing Bullying: An International Perspective

Since the beginning of the 1990's, there has been a lot of public attention to bullying and victimization in Finland. There have been changes in legislation concerning school safety and the development of bullying prevention policies at schools. For instance, the Finnish Basic Education Act (since 1999) states that every student has the right to a safe school environment. Education providers have the responsibility of making sure that students do not experience acts of violence or bullying while at school. The legislation concerns all educational levels. It was further amended in 2003, stating that "the education provider shall draw up a plan, in connection with curriculum design, for safeguarding pupils against violence, bullying and harassment, execute the plan and supervise adherence to it and its implementation". Finally, the amendments of the Comprehensive School Act (453/2001) and the Senior School Education Act (454/2001) introduced health education as an independent subject in schools. One goal of health education is to "foster physical, mental and social health and well-being and the students' acquisition of good manners. The students shall be educated in responsibility and co-operation and activities that pursue tolerance and trust among ethnic groups, peoples and cultures. The education also shall promote growing up as responsible members of society and provide capabilities to function in a democratic and equal society as well as uphold sustainable growth."

In addition to public attention and legislative changes, several local initiatives to address bullying have been carried out during the past ten years - only few of these interventions have been evaluated, however (for examples, see Koivisto, 2004; Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, & Voeten, 2005). What has been missing so far is a national strategy, or a large-scale intervention program, widely implemented in Finnish schools. In the fall of 2006 the Finnish Ministry of Education made a contract with the University of Turku concerning a development of such a program for national use. Prior to describing this program, we will introduce some of the recent research findings that are – among other relevant literature – guiding the development of the program.

The Group View on Bullying

Bullying research in Finland has very much been concerned with a group view on the phenomenon. Already in the 1980s, Lagerspetz and colleagues (Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Berts, & King, 1982) defined bullying as group aggression, based on the social relationships between the members of the school class. In the next decade, Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman and Kaukiainen (1996) focused on the question: "What do the other students do, when the bully is harassing the victim?" They started a series of studies with the focus on so-called participant roles in bullying. Utilizing a peer-report questionnaire, they identified six different participant roles children may have in the bullying process (victims, bullies, assistants of bullies, reinforcers of bullies, outsiders, and defenders of the victim)². Since then, a bulk of studies from various countries (Andreou & Metallidou, 2004; Camodeca & Goossens, 2005; Goossens, Olthof & Dekker, 2006; Menesini,

² The latest version of the questionnaire consist of 15 + 3 (for victimization) items, which are available from the authors.

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Codecasa, Benelli & Cowie, 2003; Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, Kaistaniemi & Lagerspetz, 1999; Salmivalli et al., 1996; Salmivalli, Lappalainen & Lagerspetz, 1998; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004; Schäfer & Korn, 2004; Sutton & Smith, 1999) have indicated that many students act in ways that maintain bullying problems. Even if not actually bullying others, they may, for instance, assist the child who is bullying, or reinforce the bullying behaviour by laughing along or cheering. Some students tend to silently witness what is happening or stay outside the situation. Fortunately a reasonable number of students also defend and support their victimized peers. In addition to direct intervening in bullying situations, defending behaviour involves comforting the victimized child and telling the teacher about bullying. According to the Finnish studies utilizing peer-reports of each child's behaviour, the frequency of students in the defender role is around 17-20% among sixth to eighth graders.

Observational studies have also shown that many peers are present in bullying situations, and yet they seldom intervene. Hawkins, Pepler and Craig (2001), for instance, discovered in their observational study that peers were present in 88% of all bullying episodes but tried to intervene in only 19% of cases. Similarly, the study by O'Connell, Pepler, and Craig (1999) showed that peers actively reinforced the child who was bullying 53.7% of the time in each bullying segment and supported the victimized child only 25.4% of the time. It seems that the presence of classmates is more likely to maintain the bullying interaction instead of ending it.

What would happen if peers intervened more frequently? Hawkins and colleagues (2001) discovered that when peers intervened, 57% of their efforts were actually successful in stopping the bullying episode. In addition, it should be considered that even if the peer intervention was not successful in ending the bullying, the support received from classmates is very likely to make the victimized child feel better. Thus, if peers are part of the problem, they can also be an important part of the solution. We therefore consider the mobilization of the peer group as a key element in bullying interventions.

Who are the defenders?

The roles of children involved in bullying and/or being victimized have been extensively studied for decades, beginning with the pioneering work of Olweus (1973; 1978). However, we know almost nothing about factors explaining involvement in the other participant roles. Recently, in our research group, there has been a growing attention to the defender role. If we want to engage more children in supporting victimized children and taking sides with them, we must know more about factors associated with such behaviours.

It should be noted that most children hold attitudes that are against bullying (i.e., they think it is not right) and that are supportive of victimized children (i.e., they know it is right to support the victimized child or to tell the teacher if someone is being bullied) (Boulton, Trueman & Flemington, 2002; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Rigby & Slee, 1991; Whitney & Smith, 1993). Likewise, after watching bullying episodes on a video, 48% of the students

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reported that they would defend the victimized student if they were in that situation (Rigby & Johnson, 2006). There seems to be a disconnect – something prevents children from defending their bullied peers even if they think that it would be the right thing to do and have intentions of doing so.

There are sex differences in attitudes towards victimized children: Girls tend to feel even more sympathy towards those who are victimized than boys (Rigby & Slee, 1991). Similarly, the study by Rigby and Johnson (2006) showed that in primary school, girls tended to be more ready to support the victimized children than boys. The gender differences found in attitudes seem to hold for actual behaviours as well. Several studies have found that girls tend to engage in defending behaviour more than boys (Goossens et al., 2006; Menesini et al., 2003; Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, Kaistaniemi & Lagerspetz, 1999; Salmivalli et al., 1996; Salmivalli, Lappalainen & Lagerspetz, 1998; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004, Sutton & Smith, 1999). For instance, in the study by Salmivalli and colleagues (1996), only 4.5% of the sixth-grade boys were identified as defenders of victimized students, while 30.1% of the girls were assigned this role. These findings are not surprising in the light of studies showing that girls are generally more empathic and engage in prosocial behaviours more often than boys (for a recent review, see Rose & Rudolph, 2006).

Age is another relevant factor. When students grow older their anti-bullying attitudes decrease. Rigby and Slee (1991) found in their study that along with age, students' attitudes towards victimized youth became less supportive, at least up to age 16. Also, as compared to early secondary school pupils, primary school students appear to be more ready to defend children who are bullied (Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Salmivalli and Voeten (2004) provided similar evidence in their study of fourth, fifth, and sixth-graders. Both anti-bullying attitudes and anti-bullying norms decreased when children entered preadolescence. Similarly, actual defending behaviour decreases as a function of age (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004).

Personality traits also have been associated with defending victimized children; defenders tend to be more friendly, and have higher levels of emotional stability than pro-bullies (bullies, assistants, and reinforcers) (Tani, Greenman, Schneider, & Fregoso, 2003). Defending also has been associated with high scores in affective empathy, but it is not related to cognitive empathy (Caravita, DiBlasio, & Salmivalli, in press).

Andreou and Metallidou (2004) studied the association between different academic and social cognitions and self-reported behaviour in bullying situations in a sample of preadolescents. Both academic cognitions (self-efficacy for learning and performance) and social cognitions (self-efficacy for assertion) failed to predict defending behaviours. Along with these findings, Rigby and Johnson (2006) found that perceived self-efficacy did not predict intentions to intervene in bullying situations. There were other attributes related to defending, however: Children who had rarely or never bullied others, had previously intervened, had positive attitude towards victimized peers, or believed that their parents and friends expected them to support victimized children were more willing to intervene in bullying situations.

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Overall, the participant roles have proved to be quite stable, but the role of defender does not seem to show as strong consistency as other participant roles (Salmivalli et al., 1998), suggesting that it might be determined by contextual factors as well. Actually, the strongest predictor for defending behaviour in the eighth grade was the friends' tendency to defend victimized peers, i.e. students whose current friends defended the victim also tended to do so themselves.

Classrooms differed from each other in how much the students in each class tend to side with the victimized student(s). Whereas students' attitudes towards bullying predict behaviour at the individual level, classroom norms predict variation in defending behaviour at the classroom level (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). Class context seems to predict girls' engagement even more strongly than that of boys.

Also students' social status within the peer group is associated with defending victimized peers. The defenders are usually well liked among their classmates (Goossens et al., 2006; Schäfer, 2004; Salmivalli et al., 1996). In an Italian sample of both primary and secondary school students (Caravita et al., in press), it was found that defending behaviour was related to social preference in both age groups. In addition, it was associated with perceived popularity among the primary school children.

In a sample of almost 500 fourth- and eighth-graders, we have just conducted preliminary analyses regarding the individual and group-level factors associated with assisting and reinforcing children who bully, withdrawing from bullying situations, and defending the bullied student(s). When controlling for the other behaviours, each way of participating in bullying has its unique correlates. When it comes to defending behaviour, we have found it to be associated with being well-liked, being admired, being perceived as popular, having many friends, not being alone, doing well at school, being well-known, co-operating, having communal (prosocial) goals, and with getting what one wants. Furthermore, defending is even related to looking good and being good at sports! In other words, students who defend their bullied peers are described in very positive terms by their classmates – this in itself might be an important message to children and adolescents.

A Study on Social Cognitive Factors Behind Defending Victimized Peers

Although there are some hints about the factors associated with defending behaviours, a great deal remains unknown. We have recently started to examine some social cognitive associates of defending, namely, self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. *Self-efficacy beliefs* are defined as "beliefs in one's capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (Bandura, 1997). These beliefs are context-specific in their nature: self-efficacy thus refers to one's self-perceived ability to perform a specific act in a specific situation (i.e., perceived ability to support and defend the victim of bullying). They influence, for instance, the choices people make, the amount of effort spent on an activity, and the maintenance of the

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action when facing obstacles. Self-efficacy beliefs also affect the amount of stress and anxiety individuals experience when performing certain tasks.

Research indicates that self-efficacy beliefs are associated with behaviour. For instance, children's self-efficacy for aggression is related to aggressive behaviour (Perry, Perry & Rasmussen, 1986) and bullying (Andreou, Vlachou & Didaskalou, 2005), whilst self-efficacy for assertiveness is associated with lower scores in physical victimization (Andreou et al., 2005). In adult samples interpersonal self-efficacy (i.e., individuals' perception of how well they are able to handle their relationships effectively) has been found to be related to prosocial behaviour (Caprara & Steca, 2005) and self-efficacy for helping is associated with higher scores in helping behaviour (George, Carroll, Kersnick, & Calderon, 1998). Quite surprisingly, the latter study also indicated that although women were more engaged in helping behaviours, they did not feel more efficacious than men in relation to such behaviours.

Outcome expectations *are* "judgments of the likely consequences that behaviour will produce" (Bandura 1986). They are considered to be independent from self-efficacy beliefs and therefore should make an independent contribution to the prediction of behaviour. Studies have provided evidence that outcome expectations are associated with behaviour: For instance, positive outcome expectations for aggression are associated with higher levels of aggressive behaviour (Perry et al., 1986).

In our study, we were interested specifically in self-efficacy beliefs for defending and supporting those victimized by bullying and the outcome expectations students had concerning these behaviours. In addition we were interested whether these cognitions predicted actual behaviour in bullying situations. More specifically, we examined:

1. Sex and age differences in efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations regarding defending behaviour in bullying situations.
2. Whether self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations are related to behaviour in bullying situations (defending and supporting victimized peers, staying outside bullying situations, or reinforcing the bullying).

Participants

The target sample consisted of all fourth and eight graders (N=563) from a small sized town (approximately 20,000 inhabitants) in south-west Finland. Originally 517 students filled in the questionnaires, but 6 were excluded from the analysis due to excessive missing data. Thus, the final sample included 511 students (271 girls and 240 boys) from the fourth (M=10.6 years, n=293) and eight grades (M=14.6 years, n=218) from 25 school classes. Subsequently we excluded students who were evaluated by less than five classmates from all analyses involving peer reports. Consequently, the sample size in these analyses was 481.

Measures

Behaviour in bullying situations (defending victimized peers, staying outside of bullying situations, or reinforcing the bullying) was assessed by nine peer report items from the 15-item version of the Participant Role Questionnaire (PRQ) (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). These nine items constitute the defender, outsider, and reinforcer scales. The participants read the items and marked (with an "X") in a class roster, which ones of their same-sex classmates engaged in each behaviour in situations of bullying. They were allowed to mark an unlimited number of same-sex classmates for each item.

Defender scale ($\alpha = .89$) consists of three items describing behaviours indicative of defending and supporting the child who is victimized in bullying situations: "Tries to make the others stop bullying"; "Comforts the victim or encourages him/her to tell the teacher about the bullying"; "Tells the others to stop bullying or says that bullying is stupid". Outsider scale ($\alpha = .85$) consists of three items describing behaviours indicative of staying outside or withdrawing from bullying situations: "Stays outside the situation;" "Is usually not present;" "Doesn't take sides with anyone". Reinforcer scale ($\alpha = .75$) consists of three items describing behaviours indicative of reinforcing the child who is bullying: "Comes around to see the situation;" "Laughs;" "Incites the student who is bullying by shouting or by saying: Show him/her!" For each scale, the total number of nominations received by each student was summed up and divided by the number of peers doing the evaluation. Scale scores were created by averaging across the three items on each scale.

Efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations with respect to defending were assessed by self reports. To assess self-efficacy beliefs for defending behaviour students were asked to evaluate on a three-item scale how easy or difficult it would be for them to defend the victim of bullying (e.g., Trying to make the others stop the bullying would be (0 = very easy... 3 = very difficult) for me.) The items were drawn from the PRQ items describing the defending behaviour. Answers were reverse coded, so that higher self-efficacy scores indicated higher self-efficacy for defending. Scores were averaged across three items, with three being the highest possible score. Internal consistency (Chronbach alpha) for the scale was .65.

Two scales were formed to measure outcome expectations: Positive outcome expectations ($\alpha = .82$) were assessed by means of nine items measuring positive outcome expectations regarding the defending behaviours (e.g., If I would try to make the others stop the bullying, the bullying would end or decrease). The students evaluated how likely it would be for the consequence mentioned in each item to happen (0 = not likely at all... 3 = very likely). Similarly, the Negative Outcome Expectations scale ($\alpha = .84$) consisted of means of nine items measuring negative outcome expectations regarding the defending behaviours (e.g., If I would try to make others stop bullying, the bullying would increase). The behaviours were again identical to the ones in the PRQ defender scale. The items for both positive and negative outcome expectations included expected outcomes for the victim (e.g., the victim would feel better / the victim would feel worse), for the self

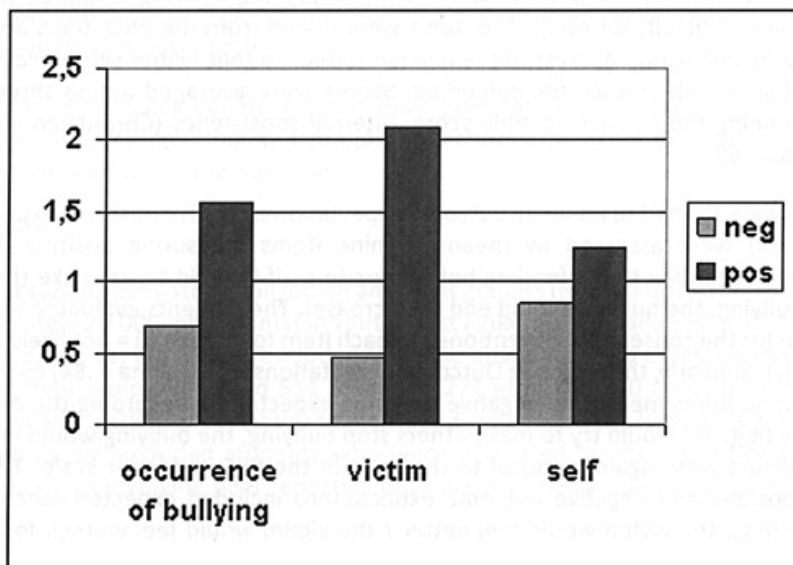
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(e.g., I would be respected by others / I would be disliked and harassed, too), and for the occurrence of bullying (e.g., bullying would end or decrease / bullying would increase).

Results

Means and standard deviations of all study variables are displayed in Table 1. Overall the students reported feeling most efficacious to comfort victimized peers and to encourage them to tell the teacher about bullying. Altogether 73.6% of the students reported that it would be easy or very easy for them to comfort a victimized child, whereas only 4.3% reported it would be very difficult. The most difficult course of action was trying to make the others stop bullying, although 42.8 % of the students felt it would be easy or very easy. Concerning outcome expectations, students generally believed that defending would have more positive than negative consequences in all three outcome areas, for the victimized student, for the self, as well as for the occurrence of bullying. Similarly, the results of paired samples t-test in which all positive and all negative outcome expectations were treated as two separate scales indicated that overall, students expected more positive than negative consequences for defending behaviour ($t(511)=28.87$, $p<.001$). However, examination of the subscales reveals that most negative outcomes (being disliked and harassed) and least positive outcomes (being respected) were expected for the self (see Figure 2.). Interestingly, negative and positive outcome expectations concerning self were not correlated, which indicates that it was possible for a student to expect *both* positive and negative outcomes for themselves if they defended the victim. In contrast, negative and positive outcome expectations concerning occurrence of bullying, as well as the victims' feelings were negatively related to each other.

Means for positive and negative expectations regarding defending behaviour in three outcome areas.



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Means and standard deviations for all study variables grouped by grade level and sex

Scale	Fourth Grade		Eighth Grade	
	M	SD	M	SD
Self-efficacy for defending				
Male	1.56	.57	1.58	.59
Female	1.73	.67	1.79	.63
Positive outcomes for defending				
Male	1.62	.61	1.50	.47
Female	1.76	.47	1.62	.45
Negative outcomes for defending				
Male	.70	.54	.71	.53
Female	.61	.46	.59	.48
Defending				
Male	.19	.18	.10	.11
Female	.25	.16	.22	.17
Staying outside				
Male	.24	.18	.32	.21
Female	.24	.14	.40	.19
Reinforcing				
Male	.18	.13	.28	.15
Female	.12	.09	.10	.12

Sex and grade differences for all study variables were evaluated by running a series of 2 (sex) x 2 (grade) ANOVAs. We found a significant sex difference for self-efficacy beliefs, $F(1,507) = 11.50, p < .01$, indicating that girls felt more efficacious to defend the victimized student(s) than boys. With respect to outcome expectations, girls expected more positive outcomes for defending than boys, $F(1,507) = 7.48, p < .01$. In contrast, boys

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were more likely to believe that defending would result in negative consequences than girls, $F(1,507) = 5.08$, $p < .05$. In addition, younger students anticipated more positive outcomes for defending behaviour than older students, $F(1,507) = 8.20$, $p < .01$. There were no significant sex by grade interactions for either self-efficacy beliefs or outcome expectations, indicating that the sex differences were similar in both age groups.

Associations Between Cognitions and Behaviour

The associations between social cognitions (self-efficacy for defending behaviour, positive and negative outcome expectations) and three types of behaviours in bullying situations (defending, staying outside, reinforcing the bully) were investigated by three separate hierarchical regression models. Sex and grade (step 1), self-efficacy beliefs, and both negative and positive outcome expectations (step 2) were included as predictors in the model. For each model, one of the behaviours in bullying situations (defending, staying outside, reinforcing the bully) was entered as the dependent variable.

Grade and sex (step 1) explained 9 % of the variance in defending behaviour, $\Delta R^2 = .09$, $\Delta F = 23.01$, $p < .001$. Girls and younger students tended to defend the victimized peers more than boys and older students. At step 2, positive and negative outcome expectations did not have any significant effect on defending behaviour and those variables were removed from the model. However, after taking into account sex and grade effects reported above, self-efficacy added significantly to defending behaviour, $\Delta R^2 = .02$, $\Delta F = 8.03$, $p < .01$. The more efficacious the child felt regarding defending, the more likely he/she was to defend the victimized student(s), $Beta = .12$, $p < .001$.

Staying outside bullying situations was more typical for girls and older students than for boys and younger students, $R^2 = .12$, $\Delta F = 31.34$, $p < .001$. At step 2, positive outcome expectations were removed from the model since they did not have any significant effect on tendency to stay out of bullying situations. However, self-efficacy and negative outcome expectations explained additional variance in staying outside the bullying situations $\Delta R^2 = .04$, $\Delta F = 11.42$, $p < .001$. The effects of both efficacy beliefs ($Beta = -.18$, $p < .001$), and negative outcome expectations ($Beta = -.14$, $p < .01$) were negative. Thus, students who stayed outside lacked self-efficacy to defend the victimized peer(s), but they did not anticipate negative outcomes for defending.

Boys and older students tended to reinforce the student who is bullying more than girls and younger students, $\Delta R^2 = .16$, $\Delta F = 45.46$, $p < .001$. Again, positive outcome expectations did not have any significant effect on reinforcing behaviour and were removed from the model. However, efficacy beliefs ($Beta = .13$, $p < .01$) and negative outcome expectations ($Beta = .18$, $p < .001$) were both significant positive predictors of reinforcing behaviour, $\Delta R^2 = .04$, $\Delta F = 11.42$, $p < .001$. Thus, students who felt efficacious to defend victimized peers, but expected negative consequences from defending were likely to reinforce the bullying.

Conclusions

Our results indicated that girls felt more efficacious to defend their bullied peers and also expected more positive outcomes from such behaviours than boys did. Boys expected more negative consequences for defending behaviour than girls. Eighth graders felt as efficacious to defend the victimized student(s) as fourth graders, but they expected less positive outcomes from defending behaviour than younger students. Overall, the participants had more positive than negative outcome expectations for defending victimized peer(s). Most negative outcomes were expected for self, however. It seems that students know that defending the victimized student would make a difference (positive outcome expectations), but many of them just don't have the courage to do it or don't know how to do it.

Overall, our findings regarding the sex difference in self-efficacy to defend differ from some previous studies (e.g., Andreou et al., 2005; Caprara & Steca, 2005) who did not find such a difference. Furthermore, some studies have failed to find an association between self-efficacy and defending (Andreou & Metallidou, 2004). One explanation might be the different context of self-efficacy studied. We focused specifically on *self-efficacy related to defending the victimized student*, whereas previous studies examined self-efficacy for assertion, or interpersonal self-efficacy.

In accordance with previous studies (Goossens et al., 2006; Menesini et al., 2003; Salmivalli et al., 1999; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004), sex and age also predicted actual behaviours in bullying situations. Girls tended to defend the victim of bullying or stay outside bullying situations more than boys, while boys reinforced the bully more than girls. Younger students were more likely to defend the victimized peer(s) whilst older students tended to engage to behaviours which maintained the bullying (staying outside, reinforce the bullying child). All these findings suggest that bullying prevention programs might be more effective if initiated from a young age – this is the experience gained from several intervention studies as well (Smith, Pepler, & Rigby, 2004).

Both self-efficacy beliefs and negative outcome expectations predicted behaviours in bullying situations over and above the effects of age and gender. Students who tended to defend and support the victimized students(s) also felt more efficacious to do so. On the basis of our results, students who tend to stay outside bullying situations or reinforce bullying – the two groups that we might like to target in our peer group interventions – might have different obstacles for defending. Reinforcing the bullying was related to expecting negative outcomes for defending, whereas staying outside bullying situations was associated with low efficacy for defending.

Based on our findings we suggest that interventions should aim especially at providing students with skills and courage to intervene in bullying situations and to support victimized students. Our results indicate that while self-efficacy for defending and

supporting the victimized peer(s) is an important individual factor that predicts behaviour in bullying situations, the outcomes students expect from such behaviour also contribute to their behaviour. Interestingly, negative outcome expectations predict behaviour more strongly than positive ones. In other words, students generally seem to believe that defending would have positive effects, but their behaviour is not guided by this belief, but rather by their expectations concerning possible negative outcomes. This discrepancy should also be taken into account in bullying prevention and interventions. There is still a pressing need for knowledge about other factors predicting defending behaviours. Furthermore, if girls' behaviour is more affected by group level factors those should also be taken into account in future research. Given the role of context, the effects of cognitions may vary from one school class to another, i.e., the context might moderate the influence of cognitions on behaviour. Finally, follow-up data are needed in order to distinguish the precursors of defending from the consequences of such behaviours.

The KiVa program

In the Finnish language, KiVa stands for "Kiusaamista Vastaan" or "Against Bullying", and it is the name of the new national bullying prevention program in Finland³. The development of the program, as well as the teacher education component and the program evaluation component, are financed by the Finnish Ministry of Education. The KiVa team works in the University of Turku and involves people from the Department of Psychology as well as from the Centre for Learning Research. The program is based on the latest research on bullying and victimization and it involves several unique features: 1. An exceptionally large variety of materials for students, teachers, and parents; 2. Utilizing the web and virtual learning environments, such as a computer game designed to discourage bullying; and 3. Emphasis on the bystanders, in order to encourage bystanders to show that they are against bullying and supportive of victimized students and to discourage bystanders from joining in the bullying.

Ten student lessons (one lesson each month, starting at the beginning of the school year in August) involve discussion, group work, short video clips, and role-play exercises. The themes go from inter-individual respect to bullying and its mechanisms and consequences. Several lessons concern the role of the group in either maintaining bullying or putting an end to it. The teacher education and materials provide the teachers with knowledge about best practices in handling acute bullying cases that come to their attention. We encourage the teachers in each school to form a team that deals with the acute cases as they arise, intervening in the behaviour of children who bully and also involving prosocial classmates who are encouraged to support the victimized child. Parents are provided with information about bullying and victimization and advice concerning strategies they can use to prevent these problems. The KiVa program utilizes

³ KiVa also means something which is nice, jolly good, great, or cute

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the virtual learning environment in several ways. Many of the core components of the program such as teacher materials, student lessons and exercises, and the anti-bullying computer game can be found in the web.

The role of bystanders is emphasized in the KiVa program. The ideology behind the program is thus very similar to a previous Finnish intervention study (Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, Voeten, & Sinisammal, 2004; Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, & Voeten, 2005), which has been one of the most effective ones studied to date (Smith, Schneider, Smith, & Ananiadou, 2004). This time, however, the program offers more concrete tools and a clearer schedule to be followed in the participating schools, as well as more systematic guidance for the teachers during the implementation. The teacher education has begun and the program was launched in the first 39 pilot schools in the fall of 2007. We believe it will have positive effects – among other things - on efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and group norms, all of which are ultimately expected to encourage students to take action against bullying. This way, the aims of the legislation we already have in Finland will actually become realized in our children's lives.

Key Messages

1. Bullying prevention is likely to be most effective when initiated when children are young.
2. Bullying is a group phenomenon. Mobilization of the peer group to support and defend victimized peers is crucial for successful bullying prevention and intervention.
3. Compared to students who do not, students who do defend victimized peers tend to feel more efficacious about their own defending behaviour. Therefore interventions should provide students with skills and strategies to increase feelings of competence about providing support to peers in need.
4. Students generally believe that defending would have positive effects. Their behaviour, however, is not guided by this belief, but rather by their beliefs about possible negative outcomes. This discrepancy should be taken into account in bullying prevention and interventions.

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Standing Up for the Victim, Siding with the Bully or Standing by? Bystander Responses in Bullying Situations

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Abstract

In this study we examined children's self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and outcome values in relation to bystander responses in bullying situations. We proposed that beyond the effect of self-efficacy, the decision to defend the victim of bullying vs. remain passive vs. reinforce the bully depends on outcomes children expect from defending, and on the value they place on these outcomes. Our sample consisted of 6397 Finnish children (3232 girls and 3165 boys) from third, fourth, and fifth grades (mean ages 9–11 years). Results showed that the motivational underpinnings of defending the victim, remaining passive, and reinforcing the bully varied. Defending was associated with the expectation that the victim feels better as a result of defending as well as valuing such an outcome. Reinforcement of bullying was associated with negative expectations and not caring about the positive outcomes. Conflicting expectations and values were linked to remaining passive. Results are discussed in terms of their implications for anti-bullying interventions.

Keywords: bullying; participant roles; outcome expectations; outcome values

Introduction

Standing up for the victim of bullying is an effective way to stop peer harassment, yet witnesses rarely intervene (Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig, 2001; O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999). It has been suggested that empowering bystanders to actively support and defend their victimized peers is a key for effective interventions against bullying (e.g., Frey, Hirschstein, Edström, & Snell, 2009; Pepler, Craig, & O'Connell, 2010; Salmivalli, Kärnä, & Poskiparta, 2010). In order to be able to encourage peers to support

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the victim, it is necessary to identify the motives explaining why most bystanders choose either not to get involved or to encourage bullying. Understanding the motives of uninvolved and the reinforcement of bullying is particularly critical because most youth report disapproving bullying (Boulton, Trueman, & Flemington, 2002; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Rigby & Slee, 1991; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004; Whitney, Nabuzoka, & Smith, 1992). In other words, the most frequent behavioral responses in bullying situations appear not to correspond with the private sentiments of the bystanders. The current study is designed to shed some light on the motives behind the behavioral choices of youth who witness bullying.

Defending the victimized peer and reinforcing the bully are two opposite ways to take sides in bullying situations. By defending, the bystander takes a clear stand on behalf of the victim by directly stepping in, seeking help, or comforting the victim. In contrast, reinforcement of the bully typically involves displays of approval (e.g., smiling, laughing along) or direct verbal incitements (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). Remaining uninvolved or passive, in turn, is characterized by not taking sides with anyone (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). As such, the three sets of bystander behaviors (defending, reinforcing, and remaining uninvolved) provide interesting contrasts, and the motivational underpinnings of each response should vary. In general, research shows that students who defend the victim of bullying have both the skill and the will to do so whereas students who remain passive seem to lack both (Caravita, Di Blasio & Salmivalli, 2009; Gini, Albiero, Benelli, & Altoè, 2008; Pöyhönen, Juvonen, & Salmivalli, 2010; Pozzoli & Gini, 2010). A recent study comparing self-reported defending and remaining passive (Pozzoli & Gini, 2010) suggested that students who remain passive lack both the sense of personal responsibility to help their classmates and the self-reliance to do so whereas students who defend the victim are high on both. Students who reinforce the bully, in turn, seem to be motivated in part by aggression-related cognitions (e.g., hostile attributions), much like bullies are (Andreou & Metallidou, 2004; Camodeca & Goossens, 2005a). To better understand how to prevent responses that encourage and maintain bullying (i.e., joining the bully and remaining passive) as well as to encourage those that empower bystanders to intervene, comparisons of relevant motivational underpinnings of all three sets of responses to bullying situations are needed.

Self-efficacy, Outcome Expectations, and Outcome Values

Guided by the social cognitive approach, we focus on three motivational constructs: self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and outcome values. We presume that the decision to defend vs. not to defend depends partly on the witnesses' sense of efficacy (Bandura, 1997, 2001). If youth feel incapable of standing up for a vulnerable peer, then they are unlikely to do that (Pöyhönen, Juvonen, & Salmivalli, 2010). As a matter of fact, Gini et al. (2008) showed that social self-efficacy distinguished between the students who tended to defend their victimized classmates and the students who remained passive when bullying took place.

Additionally, we presume that outcome expectations can explain behavior independently from self-efficacy beliefs. What kinds of expectations might children have concerning defending behavior? In the research literature, defending has been associated with two potential positive outcomes: bullying decreasing (O'Connell et al., 1999; Salmivalli, Voeten, & Poskiparta, 2011) and the victim's plight being alleviated (Sainio, Veenstra, Huitsing, & Salmivalli, 2011). However, the witnesses of bullying

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might be concerned about more personal (and possibly negative) consequences, such as losing their status among their peers once they take sides with the victim (Juvonen & Galván, 2008; Slee, 1994). We assessed students' expectations concerning each of these outcomes of defending, as well as the extent to which they value such outcomes.

Compared with prior studies that have relied on general measures of expectations and/or values (Andreou & Metallidou, 2004; Pöyhönen & Salmivalli, 2008), we therefore advance the research on bystander responses by assessing *specific* outcome expectations and values. This approach is important inasmuch as expectations of negative outcomes (e.g., decreased social status) can deter bystanders from intervening even when youth feel otherwise efficacious. Although efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancies are likely to overlap (e.g., Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006), it is important to disentangle their independent effects. If, for example, defending behavior is predicted by outcome expectancies about making the victim feel better rather than by efficacy beliefs, interventions should focus on enhancing empathy toward victimized students more so than on practicing defending strategies that increase efficacy beliefs. Similarly, it is important to compare different expectancies across various bystander responses to determine whether the expectations of losing social status (as a consequence of defending) is a particularly strong deterrent for not intervening whereas expectancies about helping the victim are critical in motivating a witness to intervene.

Both the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997, 2001) and the expectancy-value framework (e.g., Atkinson, 1964; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992) suggest that values placed on specific outcomes are also important determinants of behavior. In other words, even if witnesses expect to make the victim feel better by intervening in a bullying situation, they may not do that unless they consider it important to alleviate another person's plight. Accordingly, it has been proposed that outcome values moderate the effect of outcome expectancies on behavior (Williams, Anderson, & Winnett, 2005). Thus, to defend a victim, bystanders should not only expect positive outcomes, but also value such outcomes (e.g., hoping to alleviate the pain of the victim). It is therefore important to investigate the interactions between outcome expectancies and values (Hall, Herzberger, & Skowronski, 1998).

As far as we know, there are two published studies investigating the role of efficacy beliefs, expected consequences, and/or value placed on those consequences in association to bystander responses. By relying on self-reported responses to hypothetical bullying situations, Andreou and Metallidou (2004) found that the values children placed on tangible and status rewards achieved by aggression predicted reinforcement of bullying over and above efficacy beliefs whereas outcome expectations were unrelated to siding with the bully. None of the three motivational constructs were related to self-reports of defending or remaining passive, which might be due to the fact that the study focused on aggression-related cognitions. To be able to tap motivational basis of defending, it would be important to consider cognitions specifically related to such behaviors. This was done by Pöyhönen and Salmivalli (2008) who showed that although self-efficacy for defending was positively associated with standing up for victims and negatively with remaining uninvolved, the tendency to anticipate negative outcomes from defending was associated with reinforcing the bully. However, because the outcome expectations were analyzed at a very general level (positive vs. negative), it remains unclear what specific expectations (e.g., making the victim feel better vs. improving one's own social status) drove the different bystander responses.

Additionally, the study did not assess outcome values when trying to account for bystander behaviors.

Current Study

The present study adds to the existing literature in several ways. First of all, we compare the motivational underpinnings of the three sets of bystander responses in bullying situation by relying on self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and outcome values. Secondly, we extend past research by including motives specifically related to defending the victim (e.g., helping the victim to feel better, decreasing bullying). As taking sides with the victim is the behavior most children believe they *should engage in* (e.g., Boulton et al., 2002; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004), defending-related cognitions (rather than cognitions related to aggression) are likely to be especially important determinants of bystanders' reactions in bullying situations. Inclusion of such motives allows us to contrast different outcome expectations (i.e., expectations of bullying decreasing, victim feeling better, and oneself gaining social status), as well as corresponding values (valuing bullying decreasing, victim feeling better, and gaining social status) to ascertain whether particular expectations and values are more important than others in predicting different bystander responses. Thirdly, instead of relying on self-reported bystander responses to typical bullying incidents (prone to social desirability effects), peer nomination methods were used to obtain data on students' bystander behaviors (i.e., defending, reinforcing the bully, remaining passive).

We hypothesized that self-efficacy related to defending is positively associated with defending behavior, negatively associated with remaining passive, and unrelated to reinforcing the bully. That is, we expected confidence in one's own skills to explain helping the victim whereas the lack of confidence would deter defending. We further hypothesized that beyond these effects, all three outcome expectations (i.e., outcome expectations for bullying to decrease, victim feeling better, and one's own social status improving) would be positively associated with defending behavior. It was less clear whether any of these expectations would be related to the other two responses. With respect to the outcome values, we assumed that at least two of the positive consequences (bullying decreasing, victim feeling better) would be associated with defending. Again, it was unclear whether these values would be related to reinforcing the bully and to remaining passive. However, as aggressive behavior is linked to placing high value on status rewards (Hall, Herzberger, & Skowronski, 1998; Perry, Williard, & Perry, 1990) and status goals (Salmivalli, Ojanen, Haanpää, & Peets, 2005; Sijtsma, Veenstra, Lindenberg, & Salmivalli, 2009), we expected that placing high importance on social status among classmates would be positively related to reinforcing the bully.

As mentioned earlier, we also tested the interactive effects of specific outcome expectations and corresponding outcome values on bystander responses, while controlling for all the main effects in the model. We hypothesized to find such interactive effects for defending behavior; in particular such that the positive effects of outcome expectations on defending would be magnified when students also value the corresponding outcomes (Williams et al., 2005). Thus, bystanders who expect bullying to decrease as a consequence of defending behavior and who also value that particular outcome (i.e., consider it important that bullying decreases) should be especially likely to defend victimized peers. The interactive effects of expectations and values on

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reinforcing and remaining passive were examined as well, but again, in a more exploratory fashion.

Method

Participants

In this study we used the pretest data from the first phase of the evaluation of the KiVa anti-bullying program (Salmivalli et al., 2010). The data were collected in May 2007 and the target sample included 429 classrooms and a total of 8237 students in grades 3–5 (mean ages 9–11 years). To recruit the children, their parents were sent information letters including an active consent form (i.e., a form in which the parent or guardian had to mark whether the child is allowed to participate in the data collection). This form was first returned to the homeroom teachers, who, in turn, sent it to the KiVa staff responsible for recording parental permission. Special effort was put forth to have students return their forms. Firstly, parents could either accept or deny the consent for their children; the importance of collecting back the forms in either case was accentuated to the teachers. Secondly, the recruitment letter included a statement of the schools' principal which endorsed the importance of the study. Thirdly, in order to avoid the parents of immigrant children refusing the consent of their children because of not understanding the content of the form, the letters were translated into 15 foreign languages spoken in the students' homes.

A total of 7491 students (90.9 percent of the target sample) received active consent to participate in the study. In the analysis, we excluded children who did not have an active consent to participate or had missing values in the study variables. However, we did handle missing values through creating the mean scores even if the participant had missing data in some of the items of the subscales. To increase the reliability of the peer reports, we further excluded from the analysis data for the students whose class size was smaller than five, and students in classes where less than 60 percent of the students participated in the data collection. Thus, the final sample included 6397 elementary schoolchildren (3232 girls and 3165 boys) from third, fourth, and fifth grades ($M = 10.0$ years).

Procedure

The data were collected through Internet-based questionnaires which were completed during regular school hours in the school computer lab under the supervision of teachers. The teachers were supplied with detailed instructions concerning the procedure two weeks prior to data collection. In addition, the teachers were provided with a possibility of getting support through phone or email prior to and during the data collection in case they would have any questions. The order of the questionnaires presented to students as well as the order of the items within questionnaires were randomized.

In the beginning of the data collection, the term bullying was defined to the students. The definition included three main components of bullying: intent to harm, repeated nature, and imbalance of power (see e.g., Olweus, 1999). The teachers who were administrating the data collection read the definition out loud and the students were then asked to read the same definition. Additionally, a shortened version of the definition always appeared on the upper part of the computer screen when the students responded to bullying-related questions [i.e., Participant Role Questionnaire (PRQ)].

Measures

Behavior in Bullying Situations. The 15-item version of the PRQ (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004) was used to assess behaviors in bullying situations. Each behavior (i.e., defending the victim, remaining passive, and reinforcing the bully) was assessed by three peer-report items (the remaining six items on the scale assessed bullying behavior and assisting the bully). The participants were provided with a class roster and asked to mark an unlimited number of their classmates who engaged, when a bullying incident took place, in the behaviors described in each item. The total number of nominations received by each student for each item was summed and divided by the number of nominators. Scale scores were created by averaging across the three items resulting in three final scores that ranged from 0 to 1. *Defender scale* ($\alpha = .92$) consists of items describing behaviors indicated by defending and supporting the victim in bullying situations: ‘Tries to make the others stop the bullying’; ‘Comforts the victim or encourages him/her to tell the teacher about the bullying’; ‘Tells the other to stop bullying or says that bullying is stupid’. *Remaining passive scale* ($\alpha = .80$) consists of items describing behaviors indicating remaining passive or withdrawing from bullying situations: ‘Stays outside the situation’; ‘Is usually not present’; ‘Doesn’t take sides with anyone’. *Reinforcer scale* ($\alpha = .85$) consists of items describing behaviors indicating reinforcing the bully: ‘Comes around to watch the situation,’ ‘Laughs,’ ‘Incites the student who is bullying by shouting or by saying: Show him/her!’

Self-efficacy Beliefs for Defending Behavior. To assess self-efficacy beliefs for defending behavior, students were asked to evaluate on three items how easy or difficult it would be for them to defend the victim of bullying (e.g., ‘Trying to make the others stop the bullying would be 0 = very easy . . . 3 = very difficult for me’). The item contents paralleled the PRQ items describing defending behavior. Answers were reverse coded, so that higher scores indicated higher self-efficacy for defending. Scores were averaged across the three items. Internal consistency (Cronbach’s α) for the scale was .69.

Outcome Expectations for Defending Behavior. To assess outcome expectations for defending behavior, students were asked to evaluate on a 4-point scale what consequences they expected if they were to defend the victim of bullying. The questionnaire included three different ways to defend the victim, identical to the ones in the PRQ defender scale. The questionnaire included three subscales (i.e., expectations concerning frequency of bullying, expectations concerning victim’s well-being, and expectations concerning one’s own status). Both positive and negative consequences were included, the latter ones being reverse coded.

Expecting that bullying decreases was assessed by six items measuring outcome expectations regarding the decrease (three items, e.g., If you tried to make the others stop the bullying it would decrease or stop the bullying; 0 = not likely at all . . . 3 = very likely) or increase of the bullying (three items, reverse coded) as a result of defending, $\alpha = .75$. *Expecting that victim feels better* was assessed by six items measuring outcome expectations regarding victim feeling better (three items, e.g., If you tried to make the others stop the bullying it would make the bullied person feel better; 0 = not likely at all . . . 3 = very likely) or worse (three items, reverse coded) as a result of defending, $\alpha = .78$. Similarly, *Expecting that one’s own status improves* was assessed by six items measuring outcome expectations regarding one’s own status improving

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(three items, e.g., If you tried to make the others stop the bullying it would make the others think highly of you; 0 = not likely at all . . . 3 = very likely) or decreasing as a result of defending, $\alpha = .70$. For all three expectations, mean values of respective items were used in the analyses.

Outcome Values. To assess how important the expected outcomes are for children, they were presented nine questions and asked to evaluate on a 4-point scale how much they valued each outcome. Again, three subscales were formed: *Valuing bullying decreasing* (i.e., It is very important . . . not important at all to me that bullying decreases; that nobody is being bullied in my class; that bullying ends), $\alpha = .70$; *Valuing victim feeling better* (e.g., It is very important . . . not important at all to me that the victim of bullying is not feeling sad; that the victim of bullying enjoys staying in my class; that the victim of bullying feels better), $\alpha = .78$; and *Valuing one's status improving* (e.g., It is very important . . . not important at all to me that I am highly regarded; that I'm known as a person who helps others; that I'm liked by my classmates), $\alpha = .68$.

Results

Descriptives

The means and standard deviations (*SDs*) grouped by gender and grade are presented in Table 1. The intercorrelations among the study variables along with overall means and standard deviations are presented in Table 2. Defending behavior was positively correlated with all outcome expectations and values assessed. The highest correlations occurred between defending behavior and valuing two outcomes: bullying decreasing and victim feeling better. The tendency to remain uninvolved correlated positively but weakly with expecting the victim to feel better, valuing bullying decreasing, and valuing victim feeling better. Reinforcing the bully, on the other hand, was negatively correlated with outcome expectations and values. It was especially related to *not* valuing bullying decreasing and *not* valuing victim feeling better.

Predicting Variance in Bystander Behaviors

In order to examine the expected main effects of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and outcome values on behaviors in bullying situations, and to test the hypothesized interactions, we conducted three separate hierarchical linear regression analyses; one for each behavior of interest (i.e., defending the victim, remaining passive, and reinforcing the bully). All continuous variables were centered by standardizing across the participants (Aiken & West, 1991).

At the first step, we entered gender (dummy coded, boy = 1) and age (continuous) of the student in the regression equation as control variables. At the second step, we entered self-efficacy to investigate its unique effects on bystander responses. At the third step, we entered all three outcome expectations (i.e., bullying decreasing, victim feeling better, and one's social status improving), and at step four, we added the outcome values (i.e., bullying decreasing, victim feeling better, and one's social status improving). The decision to enter outcome expectations to the model prior to values was based on the logic that both self-efficacy and outcome expectations reflect student *cognitions or beliefs* about a certain behavior (i.e. defending) whereas outcome values reflect an *evaluation* of the behaviors. Also, as values may moderate expectations

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations Grouped by Gender and Grade

Variables	Boys (N = 3165)						Girls (N = 3232)					
	Third grade (n = 1034)		Fourth grade (n = 1053)		Fifth grade (n = 1078)		Third grade (n = 1010)		Fourth grade (n = 1062)		Fifth grade (n = 1160)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Defending	.15	.12	.13	.11	.12	.11	.28	.14	.26	.15	.23	.13
Remaining passive	.20	.12	.19	.12	.20	.13	.32	.12	.33	.13	.37	.14
Reinforcing	.14	.11	.15	.12	.18	.14	.05	.05	.05	.05	.05	.05
Self-efficacy	1.73	.76	1.74	.73	1.80	.73	1.82	.75	1.85	.69	1.90	.70
OE Bullying decreasing	1.96	.59	1.85	.62	1.82	.61	2.03	.60	1.95	.56	1.88	.57
OE Victim feeling better	2.12	.72	2.14	.70	2.20	.66	2.24	.68	2.32	.62	2.32	.58
OE One's social status improving	1.72	.60	1.70	.60	1.64	.63	1.79	.55	1.75	.57	1.70	.58
OV Bullying decreasing	2.48	.67	2.43	.68	2.34	.77	2.73	.49	2.69	.50	2.65	.51
OV Victim feeling better	2.30	.70	2.21	.74	2.16	.78	2.55	.58	2.50	.57	2.48	.59
OV One's social status improving	2.25	.65	2.22	.67	2.23	.68	2.41	.59	2.45	.52	2.45	.54

Note: OE = outcome expectations for defending; OV = outcome values for defending.

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Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations Among Study Variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Defending	.20	.14	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Remaining passive	.27	.15	.24***	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Reinforcing	.10	.11	-.21***	-.40***	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Self-efficacy	1.81	.73	.11***	-.02	.00	—	—	—	—	—	—
OE Bullying decreasing	1.90	.60	.11***	.02	-.10***	.22***	—	—	—	—	—
OE Victim feeling better	2.23	.66	.11***	.08***	-.08***	.20***	.45***	—	—	—	—
OE One's social status improving	1.71	.59	.11***	.02	-.08***	.25***	.53***	.33***	—	—	—
OV Bullying decreasing	2.56	.63	.19***	.08***	-.18***	.13***	.21***	.23***	.15***	—	—
OV Victim feeling better	2.34	.68	.20***	.06***	-.15***	.17***	.22***	.25***	.16***	.70***	—
OV One's social status improving	2.34	.62	.11***	.02	-.05***	.10***	.17***	.18***	.18***	.47***	.42***

Note: Correlations controlling for gender and age. Girl = 0. OE = outcome expectations for defending; OV = outcome values for defending. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

(Williams et al., 2005), we followed the established logic of entering the moderator term (i.e., values) after the proposed main effect (i.e., expectations). At step five, the three interaction terms between matching expectations and values (e.g., expectations for bullying decreasing \times valuing bullying decreasing) were added to the model simultaneously. Due to the large sample size, we set the significance level for all the analyses to $p < .01$. The results of the regression analyses are summarized in Table 3 and described in detail in the following.

Main Effects of Self-efficacy, Outcome Expectations, and Outcome Values. After controlling for gender and age, self-efficacy (step two in the regression analyses, see Table 3) predicted some variance in defending, but was not related to either remaining passive or reinforcing the bully. Outcome expectations (step three) had some unique effects on each behavior. The more students expected bullying decreasing, victim feeling better, and their own social status improving as a result of defending, the more likely they were to behave accordingly (i.e., to defend the victimized peers). Expecting the victim to feel better was the only expectation positively related to remaining passive. When it came to reinforcing the bully, the less the students expected the bullying decreasing and the victim feeling better as a consequence of defending, the more likely they were to reinforce the bully.

Outcome values (step four) added to the prediction of each behavior. Placing a high value on victim feeling better and bullying decreasing was related to defending the victim. Valuing bullying decreasing was also positively linked to remaining passive in bullying situations. In contrast, placing a low value on bullying decreasing and victim feeling better was related to reinforcing the bully. However, valuing one's own status improving was positively related to reinforcing the bully.

Interactions between Outcome Expectations and Outcome Values. There were significant interactive effects of outcome expectations and outcome values on each behavior (see step five in Table 3). The nature of significant interactions was examined following the procedure suggested by Aiken and West (1991). Namely, the association between the predictor (e.g., expecting that victim feels better) and the behavior (e.g., defending behavior) was computed at three levels (-1 , 0 , and $+1$ *SD*) of the moderator (e.g., valuing victim feeling better). In the follow-ups we always controlled for gender, grade, and the remaining social cognitive constructs not involved in the interaction term (e.g., when following up the interaction between the expectations and the values of victim feeling better, the effects of self-efficacy, the expectations and the values for bullying decreasing as well as expectations and values of one's social status improving were also controlled for).

In terms of defending behavior, one out of three interaction terms added to the explanation of defending over and above all the main effects in the model. Namely, the effect of expecting that the victim feels better as a result of defending was moderated by valuing that same outcome. The results of the follow-up analyses demonstrated that expectations for the victim feeling better only translated into defending behavior at high ($\beta = .059$, $p < .001$) levels of valuing the victim feeling better (see Figure 1).

One of the three interaction terms added to the prediction of remaining passive after controlling all predictors entered in the previous steps. Namely, the negative association between expectations for the decrease of bullying and remaining passive was significant only under high ($\beta = -.053$, $p < .01$) levels of valuing the bullying decreasing (see Figure 2), indicating that students were most likely to remain passive under

732 *Virpi Pöyhönen, Jaana Juvonen and Christina Salmivalli***Table 3. Outcome Expectations and Values in Relation to Behaviors in Bullying Situations: Regression Analysis for Main Effects and Interactions**

Variable	Outcome measure											
	Defending			Remaining passive			Reinforcing					
	β	ΔR^2	ΔF	β	ΔR^2	ΔF	β	ΔR^2	ΔF	β	ΔR^2	ΔF
Step 1												
Gender	-.422***			-.489***			.488***					
Age	-.074***	.183	714.441***	.041***	.242	1020.945***	.070***	.232	963.687***			
Step 2												
Self-efficacy for defending	.099***	.010	77.712***	-.019	.000	2.949	.002	.000	.027			
Step 3. Expectations												
Bullying decreasing	.037**			-.023			-.059***					
Victim feeling better	.052***			.080***			-.043**					
One's social status improving	.045**	.010	26.843***	.015	.006	15.779***	-.028	.010	28.143***			
Step 4. Values												
Bullying decreasing	.070***			.079***			-.135***					
Victim feeling better	.114***			.000			-.053**					
One's social status improving	.000	.025	68.922***	-.025	.005	12.819***	.051***	.022	63.470***			
Step 5												
OE × OV Bullying decreasing	-.002			-.036**			.051***					
OE × OV Victim feeling better	.033**			.024			.008					
OE × OV one's social status improving	.002	.001	2.664***	.006	.001	3.155***	.000	.003	7.538***			

Note: Standardized coefficients reported for the step in which predictor(s) were entered. Girl = 0. OE = outcome expectations for defending; OV = outcome values for defending.
 *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$.

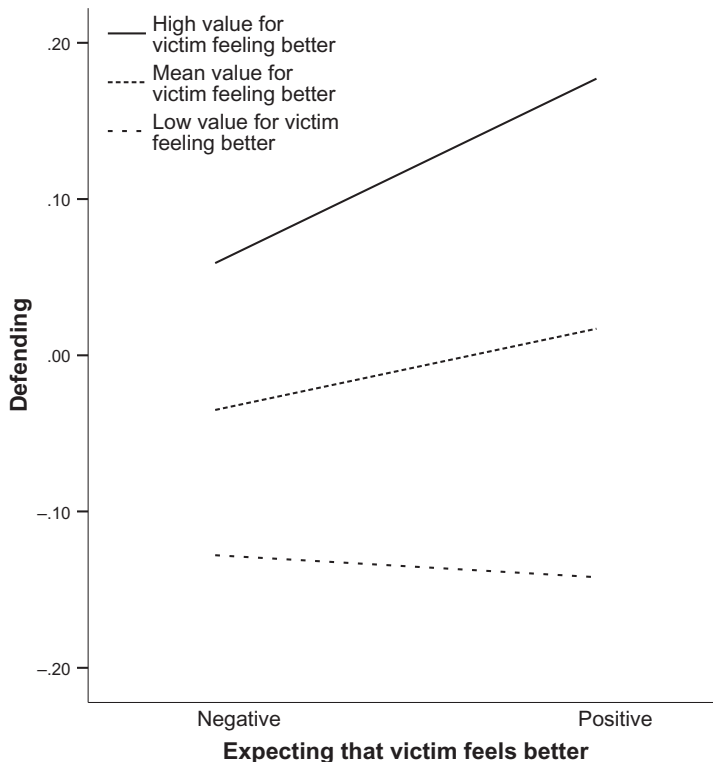


Figure 1. Relations between Expectations for the Victim Feeling Better and Defending as a Function of Values of Victim Feeling Better.

conditions of valuing the decrease of bullying, but not expecting it to happen as a result of defending.

Finally, one of the three interaction terms explained variance in reinforcing the bully over and above the main effects in the model. Namely, the effect of *not* expecting that bullying decreases as a result of defending was moderated by *not* valuing that outcome, being significant only under low ($\beta = -.096, p < .001$) and medium levels of valuing the bullying decreasing ($\beta = -.046, p < .01$) (see Figure 3). This indicates that students who did not expect bullying to decrease as a result of defending, and at the same time did not even consider it important whether that happened or not, were most likely to reinforce the bully.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the motivational basis underlying different bystander responses in bullying situations. Results supported the idea that the motivational underpinnings of defending the victim, remaining passive, and reinforcing the bully do, indeed, vary. We assessed the students' expectations regarding three possible outcomes of defending: bullying declining vs. increasing; victim feeling better vs. worse; and one's own social status improving vs. declining. The results underscored

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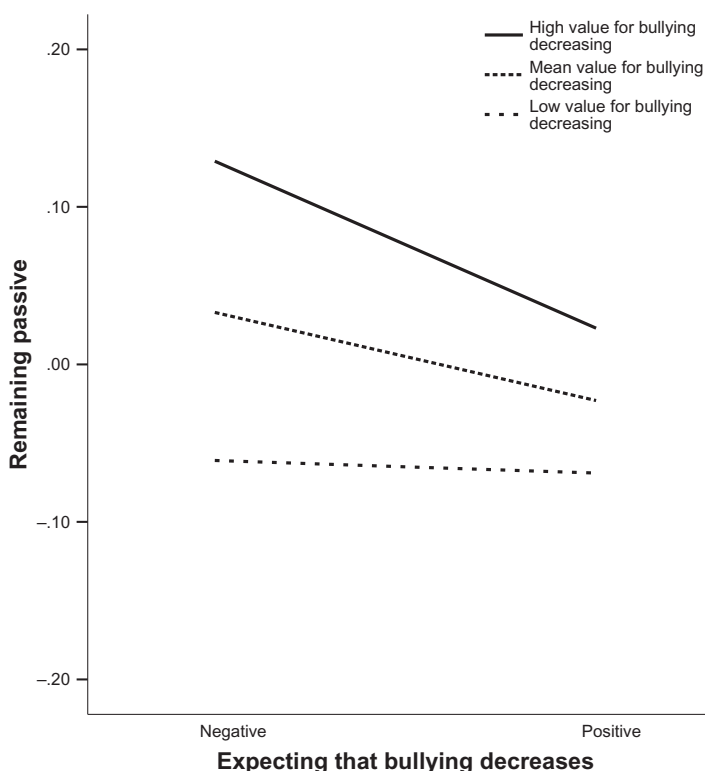


Figure 2. Relations between Expectations for the Bullying Decreasing and Remaining Passive as a Function of Values of Bullying Decreasing.

the importance of these *specific* outcome expectations and values in explaining why some children defend the victim of bullying whereas others reinforce the bully or remain passive. Importantly, outcome expectations and values predicted variance in behaviors beyond the effects of self-efficacy, indicating that they have additive value when predicting bystander responses to bullying. Moreover, as suggested by Williams et al. (2005), some of the associations between outcome expectations and behaviors were moderated by the corresponding values. This result supported the idea that in some cases, outcome expectations are not enough to explain the behavior in bullying situations. Instead, what affects the relationship between expected outcomes and actual behavior is whether the students consider that outcome important or not.

Motivational Basis of Defending the Victim of Bullying

As expected, the more efficacious students felt about defending the victim of bullying, the more likely they were to do so. In addition, there was a pattern of positive expectations and high values motivating students to defend the victim of bullying. Expectations to reduce the victim's plight by defending as well as valuing that outcome were especially characteristic of students who tended to defend the victim of bullying. Also, expectations regarding one's own status were linked to defending; students who

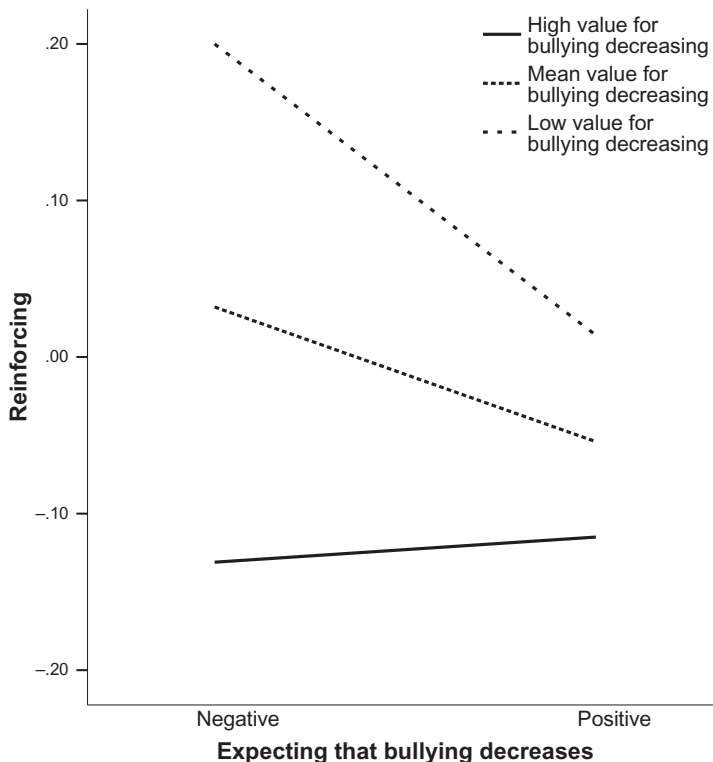


Figure 3. Relations between Expectations for the Bullying Decreasing and Reinforcing as a Function of Values of Bullying Decreasing.

expected defending to improve their status tended to act upon these expectations and defend their victimized peers. However, the value placed on the improvement of one's status was not linked to defending. It might be that because both peer acceptance (e.g., Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, 1996) and perceived popularity (Caravita, Di Blasio, & Salmivalli, 2009; Pöyhönen et al., 2010) are associated with defending the victim, these students do not have to worry whether their actions improve their status. Their positive expectations concerning their own status might reflect former positive experiences of standing up for their victimized classmate (Bandura, 1997). We also found a significant interaction, indicating that the effect of expecting the victim to feel better on defending was moderated by valuing that same outcome. In other words, the more important the victims' well-being is to students, the more likely they are to act upon their positive expectations and defend their victimized peers.

Motivational Basis of Remaining Passive

Remaining passive was linked to divergent expectations and values. For example, students who tended to remain passive did, indeed, expect the victim to feel better if defended (which might reflect their empathic skills). However, they did not believe that

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bullying would decrease as a result of defending. Hence, these students are likely to feel discouraged: They think that stopping bullying is important, but do not trust it can happen, and therefore they withdraw. Furthermore, their own status among peers was not notably important for them, supporting the view of these students as somewhat invisible children in the peer group (Salmivalli et al., 1996). We also found one significant interaction predicting variation in remaining passive in bullying situations. Namely, the effect of not expecting bullying to decrease (or expecting it to increase) as a result of defending was moderated by valuing that same outcome. In other words, students who expected that bullying would not decrease (or would even increase) as a result of attempts to defend, but valued bullying decreasing (i.e., did not want it to increase), were likely to remain passive. Thus, when students experience a set of conflicting expectations and values, they may choose to withdraw from the situation to avoid unwanted consequences of one's action. Based on our results, students who remain passive in the situation do so guided by a set of relatively ambiguous cognitions.

Motivational Basis of Reinforcing the Bully

If students expected nothing good to follow from defending the victim and did not care if the bullying decreased or the victim felt better, they were likely to reinforce the bully. This might be due to the fact that they think that bullies are powerful (e.g., Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2006) and that there is nothing one can do about it. Also, the expectations and values concerning one's own status were linked to reinforcing the bully (cf. Hall et al., 1998; Perry et al., 1990). The students who expected defending to bring down their status, but also those who valued their status among the peers highly, were likely to reinforce the bully. It is possible that some students are drawn to popular bullies hoping to become popular themselves (Juvonen & Ho, 2008; Witvliet et al., 2010). Again, there was one significant interaction: The relationship between reinforcing the bully and expecting the bullying to increase rather than decrease was strengthened by *not* valuing the bullying decreasing (not caring whether that happened or not). Our results clearly pinpoint the fact that motivational basis of students who reinforce the bully is quite opposite to that of the students who defend the victim and clearly differs from that of the students who remain passive. It is likely that cognitions motivating students to reinforce the bully resemble those of the bullies (Andreou & Metallidou, 2004; Camodeca & Goossens, 2005a).

Limitations and Future Directions

There are some limitations in our study. Firstly, we used cross-sectional data, and therefore cannot draw any conclusions about the direction of the effects. Even if the main premise of social-cognitive theory is that cognitions predict behaviors, the theory, at the same time, suggests bidirectional effects especially in terms of outcome expectations, which are thought to develop, at least partly, through past experiences (Bandura, 1997). It would be important to investigate these processes longitudinally to clarify, for instance, whether past success (or failure) in defending the victimized classmate leads to more positive outcome expectations regarding defending or vice versa. Secondly, we only focused on rather limited age range and thus could not draw any conclusions about developmental changes. This would also be an important goal for future studies. Furthermore, as we consider it important to rely on peer reports of

typical responses in bullying situations (by relying on the PRQ), we used the same options when assessing outcome expectations and values. Although possible drawbacks are associated with repetitive questions, we believe that concrete items describing the defending behavior improved the validity of measures compared with asking question about more general actions (e.g., If you defended the victim of bullying).

Bystanders' responses to bullying likely vary to some degree depending on the specific situation (e.g., whether the victim is a friend, who else is present, and so on), and future studies should examine such target/context effects. Also, multivariate techniques might be warranted, even though the interdependence of the behavioral responses was modest in the present study (4–16 percent of shared variance). The variance explained by study variables is small, especially when trying to explain why youth remain passive in bullying situations. It is unfortunate that effect sizes seen in the social sciences are often very small (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 2003) and this is also the case with the results of the present study. However, even small effects may carry practical significance (Cohen, 1992; Ferguson, 2009). The small amount of variance accounted for also suggests that there are multiple factors over and beyond the ones examined in the current study that affect how bystanders respond to bullying. For instance, we know that when it comes to defending behavior in particular, affective empathy has an significant influence on children's behavior (Caravita et al., 2009; Pöyhönen et al., 2010). In the current study, we focused on individual level factors, but it is very likely that also the larger context matters. The associations might be much stronger, for example, within a context that supports defending (e.g., class with pro-/anti-bullying norms, the presence of liked peers who stand up to bullies). Hence, an investigation of classroom- or school-level factors that might enhance the effects of individual-level factors (i.e., cross-level interactions) is an important topic for future studies. However, we believe that focusing on individual-level motivational constructs associated with defending and bystanding behaviors in bullying situations is an important first step to be taken before investigating the possible group-level processes.

Given that our main goal was to understand what factors predict defending, we included a relatively narrow set of relevant variables in this study. Future studies could include a wider scope of cognitions so that, for example, expected consequences of both bullying and defending would be tested simultaneously. Inclusion of factors that inhibit defending behavior such as the fear of becoming the next victim (Juvonen & Galván, 2008; Slee, 1994) is also needed. Additionally, it would be interesting to know whether expectancies and values associated with bullying are similar to those related to reinforcing the bully. Equally valuable would be a study comparing the predictors of bystander responses with those that predict victimization. A study by Camodeca and Goossens (2005b) indicated that the perceptions of victims resemble in some ways those of bullies: When adopting witness' perspective, victims of bullying considered retaliation as an effective strategy to stop bullying as did the bullies. Finally, it would be important to assess other factors besides conflicting expectations and values that inhibit bystanders from taking any action in bullying situations.

Practical Implications

When aiming to encourage children to defend their victimized classmates, we should, along with self-efficacy, also target children's beliefs about the possible consequences of defending and the extent to which they value those outcomes. As outcome expectations mainly develop as a result of successes or failures of former behaviors

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(Bandura, 1997), it might be difficult to influence the expectations students hold for the consequences of defending behavior. It is possible that students who remain passive in the situation have succeeded in their attempts to comfort the victim but failed in making bullying stop whereas students who tend to defend the victim have succeeded in all their attempts, resulting in firm positive expectations for that behavior. Similarly, it is possible that students who reinforce the bully have not succeeded in their former attempts to defend the victim, but have benefited from their aggressive acts (Perry, Perry, & Rasmussen, 1986; cf. Perry et al., 1990).

By encouraging students to practice safe strategies to support and defend their victimized peers, they can be protected from negative consequences of defending, and perhaps their expectations regarding such behaviors can be altered. This might be true especially for the students who tend to remain passive when witnessing bullying. They seem to perceive themselves somewhat helpless in changing the situation into the direction they want (i.e., they do value bullying decreasing, but do not think they can make it happen) and on the other hand they do expect the victim to feel better if defended, but do not value that outcome. However, even small acts of support may be very meaningful to the victim (see Rigby, 2000). Thus, it would be important that students understand that they do not need to perform big heroic acts in order to display their support to the victim.

Neither students who tend to reinforce the bully nor students who remain passive, value the well-being of the victim. This might reflect the belief that bullying is the victim's own fault and therefore he/she deserved it (Schuster, 2001; Slee, 1994). In light of such beliefs, it would be important that intervention programs address such beliefs and values. This may necessitate strategies that go beyond the typical awareness and empathy training. One possible way to accomplish this is to design scenarios in which youth imagine themselves as victims and hear what bystanders say and think about them.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that bullying is a group phenomenon. It may therefore not be the most effective practice to aim to change cognitions and values of individual students, but to address the whole group (school or class) simultaneously. This way, intervention programs could succeed in creating a context that enables students to support and defend their victimized peers. In other words, the effects of individual cognitions and values may multiply when an intervention is designed to change the cognitions and values of the whole group. This type of intervention could ultimately affect the social norms that may keep bystanders from helping the victim. For example, as protection of one's own social status is especially important for students who reinforce the bully (possibly because they expect to bask in the reflected glory of popular bullies) (Caravita et al., 2009; Vaillancourt, Hymel, & McDougall, 2003), it is critical to target the larger collective in order to regulate the norms that determine which behaviors lead to a high social standing in the group.

Some of the existing anti-bullying programs, for instance Steps to Respect program (see e.g., Frey et al., 2005, 2009) and Australian Friendly Schools project (see e.g., Cross, Hall, Hamilton, Pintabona, & Erceg, 2004), place emphasis on influencing social cognitions, such as socially responsible beliefs (see e.g., Frey et al., 2005, 2009) and outcome expectancies (see e.g., Cross et al., 2004) whereas others, for example the Norwegian Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (see e.g., Olweus, 1993) and Finnish KiVa anti-bullying program (see e.g., Salmivalli et al., 2010) stress that bullying is a group phenomenon and aim to influence the bystander's behavior by changing the norms of the group. Regardless of these slightly different theoretical standpoints

(individual beliefs and values vs. the beliefs and values of the group), all of the intervention programs mentioned above utilize school-, class-, and individual-level actions including student lessons in which together as a group the students are engaged in different activities (e.g., discussions, role plays, games, watching films). However, more empirical evidence is needed in order to know what actually is the key mechanism of change in bullying behaviors. That is, whether the reductions in bullying behaviors are mainly due to changes in individual cognitions or in cognitions of the whole group. It seems that all of these programs do agree, at least to some extent, that childrens' outcome expectations and values concerning defending the victimized classmate should be targeted through student lessons with the whole school class.

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What Does It Take to Stand Up for the Victim of Bullying?

The Interplay Between Personal and Social Factors

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The present study focused on the role of cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal factors in predicting defending of bullied peer. Specifically, the degree to which peer status moderates the effects of emotional and cognitive factors on defending behavior was tested. The sample included 489 students (257 girls) from grades 4 (mean age, 10.6 years) and 8 (mean age, 14.6 years) in Finland. The reputation of being a defender of victimized classmates was associated with a stronger sense of self-efficacy for defending and greater social status within the peer group. Moreover, perceived popularity moderated the effects of both self-efficacy and affective empathy on having a reputation of a defender. The findings are discussed in terms of their implications for interventions designed to reduce bullying.

Although most youth regard bullying as unacceptable or wrong (Boulton, Trueman, & Flemington, 2002; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Rigby & Slee,

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1991; Whitney, Nabuzoka, & Smith, 1992), research demonstrates that, when witnessing it, peers rarely intervene (Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig, 2001; O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999). Observations of bullying incidents in Canadian elementary schools revealed that although peers were present in over 85% of bullying situations, they intervened in only about 10–19% of the cases (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). In a Finnish study, the majority of sixth-grade students were classified as reinforcers or assistants to the bully as opposed to defenders (Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, 1996). Thus, bullying rarely gets publicly challenged, even when the witnesses object to it (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004).

Although it is an important part of antibullying programs to encourage students to take sides with their victimized peers (Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, Voeten, & Sinisammal, 2004; Salmivalli, Kärnä, & Poskiparta, 2009) and even though classmates who defend others can alleviate the pain associated with bullying experiences (Sainio, Veenstra, Huitsing, & Salmivalli, 2008), relatively little is known about what it takes to stand up for the victim. Defining defending broadly to include telling teacher about bullying episodes and comforting the victim, as well as direct intervening in bullying situations (e.g., Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004), the present study was designed to examine whether confidence in one's ability (i.e., self-efficacy) to intervene, affective empathy, and one's own social status are associated with defending. Guided by the child-by-environment perspective (e.g., Hodges, Malone, & Perry, 1997; Ladd, 2003), high social status was presumed to help youth act on their empathic emotions and efficacy beliefs.

As already mentioned, students likely must feel confident to defend their peers in order to do so. In their study with Italian adolescents, Gini, Albiero, Benelli, and Altoè (2008) discovered that social self-efficacy (i.e., students' perception of being competent in social situations) was indeed associated with defending behavior. As a matter of fact, it was the key component that differentiated defending behavior from passive bystanding. However, in the study by Andreou and Metallidou (2004), social self-efficacy (self-efficacy for assertion) was not associated with standing up for a victim (see also Rigby & Johnson, 2006) in a sample of Greek fourth to sixth graders. These conflicting findings may be due to somewhat different operationalizations of self-efficacy. To be able to link efficacy beliefs directly to specific behaviors (e.g. defending behavior), it would be important to assess efficacy that pertains specifically to such behaviors (cf. Crick & Dodge, 1994; Peets, Hodges, & Salmivalli, 2008).

Besides cognitions, such as efficacy, emotions are also likely to contribute to whether a child is willing to stand up for another. *Empathy*, defined as “feelings that are more congruent with other's situation than with

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[one's] own situation" (Hoffman, 2000, p. 30) and "the ability to understand and share another's emotional state or context" (Cohen & Strayer, 1996, p. 998), should play an important role in defending.¹ To our knowledge, the relation between empathy and peer-reported defending behavior in bullying situations has been addressed in only three previous studies (Caravita, Di Blasio, & Salmivalli, 2009; Gini, Albiero, Benelli, & Altoè, 2007; Gini et al., 2008). Gini and colleagues (2007) found that whereas empathy was associated with adolescents' tendency to defend their victimized peers, it was negatively associated with bullying behavior among adolescent boys. In a subsequent study, Gini et al. (2008) concluded that empathy was positively related to both defending behavior and passive bystanding among adolescents. In these studies, empathy was operationalized as a single construct consisting of both affective and cognitive components. In contrast, Caravita and colleagues separated affective and cognitive empathy in their study. Affective empathy predicted defending behavior among boys in midchildhood, whereas cognitive empathy was positively related to bullying behavior in adolescence. These findings suggest that cognitive understanding of others' feelings can be used against others, whereas feeling what others feel is more likely to trigger behaviors that would ease their negative affect.

In addition to personal characteristics, social standing in the peer group influences behaviors within the group (e.g., Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004). Several studies have shown that social preference (i.e., being liked [and not disliked] among peers) is linked with prosocial behavior (Lease, Kennedy, & Axelrod, 2002; Newcomb, Bukowski, & Pattee, 1993; Parkhurst & Hopmeyer, 1998; Sandstrom & Cillessen, 2006; Warden & Mackinnon, 2003; Wentzel, Filisetti, & Looney, 2007) and specifically with defending in midchildhood (Caravita et al., 2009; Goossens, Olthof, & Dekker, 2006), preadolescent (Salmivalli et al., 1996), and adolescent (Caravita et al.) samples. Perceived popularity (being perceived as popular [and not unpopular] among peers), on the other hand, has been found to be associated with both prosocial and antisocial interactions, including bullying others (Caravita et al.; Cillessen & Mayeux; Cillessen & Rose, 2005; Lease et al.; Newcomb et al.; Parkhurst & Hopmeyer; Sandstrom & Cillessen). As perceived

¹ The first definition emphasizes the affective nature of empathy, whereas the latter illustrates both affective and cognitive components of the construct. Whereas cognitive empathy refers to mental perspective taking and understanding how others feel, affective, or emotional, empathy refers to vicarious sharing of emotion (e.g., Davis, 1983; Duan & Hill, 1996; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). These empathy dimensions are often considered to be independent constructs, with at least partly different correlates (Davis, 1983; Davis, Luce, & Kraus, 1994).

popularity has also been suggested to be a key determinant of social power and visibility in the peer group (Lease et al.; Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2006), it might play an important role in explaining defending behavior, as well. While high-status bullies abuse their power (Juvonen, Graham, & Shuster, 2003; Vaillancourt, Hymel, & McDougall, 2003), defenders may need to be high in status to challenge the bullies. Otherwise they risk their own safety or status within the group (Juvonen & Galván, 2008).

We are aware of only one study (Caravita et al., 2009) in which the association between perceived popularity and defending was assessed. Receiving nominations of being among the five most popular kids in the class was associated with the tendency to defend or support victimized peers among primary school children. Moreover, Caravita and colleagues found an interactive effect of affective empathy and social preference on defending behavior, indicating that the association between affective empathy and defending was stronger for students with high social preference. In other words, only the high-status children appeared to act on their feelings.

It is plausible that both likeability and perceived popularity increase the likelihood of children acting on their self-efficacy or empathy. This view is in accordance with child-by-environment perspectives (Hodges et al., 1997; Ladd, 2003) in which behavior is seen as the outcome of interactive effects of the child's characteristics (e.g., empathy) and context (e.g., peer acceptance). Certain attributes (such as empathy or self-efficacy) may dispose individuals to adopt prosocial behaviors, but such behaviors are best understood in terms of an interaction between dispositions and contexts (Bandura, 1986; Graziano, Habashi, Sheese, & Tobin, 2007). Thus, a student might experience empathic affect or feel efficacious to defend the victimized peer, but still not be able to act upon these emotions and cognitions, unless he or she has a secure position in the peer group.

Aims and Hypothesis of the Present Study

The main aim of the present study was to examine the role of cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal factors in defending behavior. We hypothesized that self-efficacy would be positively related to defending behavior (Gini et al., 2008). Additionally, we expected affective empathy to be positively related to defending even after controlling for the effect of cognitive empathy (Caravita et al., 2009). Both likeability (Caravita et al.; Goossens et al., 2006; Salmivalli et al., 1996) and perceived popularity (Caravita et al.) are independently related to defending. It has also been assumed that defending risks the actor's safety or position within the group (Juvonen &

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Galván, 2008). Therefore, guided by the child-by-environment perspective (Ladd, 2003), we expected that neither self-efficacy nor affective empathy itself is enough, but rather a student must also have a secure social position in the peer group in order to be able to stand up for a victimized classmate. Thus, we hypothesized that social status variables moderate the association between self-efficacy and defending, as well as between affective empathy and defending (Caravita et al.).

We chose to include two age groups in the study, representing middle childhood (fourth grade) and early adolescence (eighth grade). The comparison of these age groups provides an intriguing contrast inasmuch as both empathy and cognitive abilities tend to increase with age (e.g., Eisenberg, 2003; Hoffman, 2000), whereas defending behavior becomes less common when students grow older (Menesini, Codecasa, Benelli, & Cowie, 2003; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). We expected eighth graders to report more affective empathy than fourth graders, and fourth-graders to receive more nominations for defending behavior than eighth graders. Although cognitive abilities (e.g., perspective taking) should increase by age (e.g., Hoffman), we did not presume that, compared to fourth graders, eighth graders necessarily have better self-efficacy for defending. This lack of age difference might reflect the increasing demands of the task for standing up for someone else in middle school (Juvonen & Galván, 2008). Finally, we did not expect the hypothesized interactions between individual and interpersonal factors to vary across age groups.

Method

Participants

The original sample consisted of all fourth and eighth graders ($N = 563$) from a small town (approximately 20,000 inhabitants) in southwest Finland. Some students ($n = 74$) were excluded from the analysis for different reasons (e.g., not filling in the forms, not having parental consent, missing part of the data collection). Thus, the final sample included 489 students (257 girls and 232 boys) from grades 4 ($M = 10.6$ years, $n = 283$) and 8 ($M = 14.6$ years, $n = 206$) from 25 school classes.²

² To increase the reliability of (same sex) peer reports, we excluded from the analysis data for the students who were evaluated by fewer than five classmates. Consequently, 28 students were further excluded from the analyses that involve peer reports (including the reliability analysis of the peer-report scales) and therefore the number of students included in these analyses was 461.

Procedure

Consistent with the Finnish Human Subjects Protection regulations, passive parental consent procedures were used after obtaining approval for the study by the school district superintendent and the principals of the schools. Parents received an information letter from the investigators that explained the goal of the study and the procedures involved, including the phone number of the principal investigator (the third author). Parents were specifically instructed to sign a form letting the teacher know whether they wished their child not to take part in the study. Altogether, 49 students (8.7%) did not receive parental consent. This figure is equivalent to the proportion of non-consented students (8.3%) in the latest Finnish research project on bullying ($N = 8,248$) that used an active consent (Kärnä, Voeten, Little, et al., in press).

Data collection for the current study took place in February 2006. Students responded to the questionnaires during regular school hours. Since we collected more data than used in the present study, two separate sessions were required. The data collection was administered by two research assistants who were trained by the first author. The confidentiality of the questionnaires was emphasized to the students, and they were advised to contact school personnel (i.e., teacher, principal, school nurse, or school psychologist) if the questionnaires resulted in any negative feelings for them. The order of questionnaires was counterbalanced across classrooms so that the order of presentation would not have any systematic effect on the results.

Measures

Defending behavior in bullying situations. Defending victimized peers was assessed by 3 peer-report items from the 15-item version of the Participant Role Questionnaire (PRQ) (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004): “Tries to make the others to stop bullying,” “Comforts the victim or encourages him/her to tell the teacher about the bullying,” and “Tells the others to stop bullying or says that bullying is stupid.” The participants were provided with a class roster and asked to mark (with an “X”) an unlimited number of their same-sex classmates who engaged in the behaviors described in each item.³ The total number of nominations received by each student for each item was summed

³ Based on our extensive use of peer-nomination data in past studies, we have learned that exclusion of names from the class rosters typically receives substantial attention and makes the nonparticipants stand out. Therefore, initially all names were included for the nomination tasks. However, the data (nominations received) regarding children whose parents did not wish them to participate were not recorded.

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up and divided by the number of nominators. Scale scores were created by averaging across the three items, resulting in a final score that ranged from 0 to 1. Internal consistency (Chronbach's α) for the scale was .89.

Social status. For social preference, participants viewed a roster with names of their same-sex classmates and nominated up to three peers (a) they liked the most (i.e., "Which ones do you like the most?") and (b) they liked the least (i.e., "Which ones do you like the least?"). The number of nominations received for each item was tallied for each child and divided by the number of nominators. A social preference score was then calculated by subtracting the proportion of like-least nominations received from the proportion of like-most nominations received (Coie, Dodge, & Coppotelli, 1982). The range of social preference scores was therefore from -1 to 1. To assess perceived popularity, participants nominated up to three same-sex classmates they perceived as (a) most popular (i.e., "Who are the most popular [students] in your class?") and (b) least popular (i.e., "Who are the least popular [students] in your class?"). The number of nominations for both items was, again, tallied for each child and divided by the number of nominators. Perceived popularity was calculated by subtracting the proportion of least popular nominations received from the proportion of most popular nominations received, resulting in a score ranging from -1 to 1.

Self-efficacy beliefs for defending behavior. To assess self-efficacy beliefs for defending behavior, students were asked to evaluate on three items how easy or difficult it would be for them to defend the victim of bullying (e.g., "Trying to make the others stop the bullying would be 0 = very easy . . . 3 = very difficult for me"). Each item content paralleled a PRQ item describing defending behavior. Answers were reverse coded so that higher scores indicated higher self-efficacy for defending. Scores were averaged across the three items. Internal consistency (Chronbach's α) for the scale was .65.

Cognitive and affective empathy. Empathy was assessed by the How I Feel in Different Situations (HIFDS) questionnaire (Bonino, Lo Coco, & Tani, 1998; see also Caravita et al., 2009) which includes subscales for both affective and cognitive empathy. Five items measuring cognitive empathy described understanding of others' feelings (e.g., "I'm able to recognize, before many other children, that other people's feelings have changed"), whereas affective empathy was assessed with seven items describing sharing others' feelings (e.g., "When somebody tells me a nice story, I feel as if the story is happening to me"). Participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which each item was true for them, using a 4-point scale (from 0 = never true to 3 = always true). Scores for both scales were averaged across items, with 3 being the highest possible score and with greater scores

indicating greater empathy. The internal consistencies (Chronbach's α s) of the subscales were .71 and .80 for cognitive and affective empathy, respectively. The content of one item ("I can imagine how my parents feel even if they do not show it") seemed to indicate cognitive rather than affective empathy. Therefore we removed this item from the affective-empathy scales (for the results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis with the same scales, see also Caravita et al.), resulting in a Chronbach's α of .81.

Results

The results are presented in three sections. First, we present sex and grade differences for all study variables, along with their intercorrelations. Second, we present the results from hierarchical regression analyses concerning the main effects and, third, the expected interactions between efficacy or empathy and social status variables on defending.

Sex and Grade Differences

The means and standard deviations grouped by sex and grade are presented in Table 1. We evaluated sex and grade differences in all study variables by a series of 2 (sex) by 2 (grade) analyses of variance (ANOVAs). We found significant effects of sex and grade in most of the study variables. Girls (coded as 0) were more likely to engage in defending behavior than were boys, $F(1, 457) = 37.83, p < .001$. Girls also reported more self-efficacy for defending victimized peers, $F(1, 457) = 9.09, p < .01$, more affective empathy, $F(1, 457) = 193.04, p < .001$, and more cognitive empathy, $F(1, 457) = 25.29, p < .001$, than boys.

There were also significant grade differences in defending behavior ($F[1, 457] = 13.85, p < .001$), affective empathy ($F[1, 457] = 4.49, p < .05$), and cognitive empathy ($F[1, 457] = 5.01, p < .05$). Although fourth graders were more likely to engage in defending behavior than were eighth graders, they reported less affective and cognitive empathy. A sex-by-grade interaction, $F(1, 457) = 11.71, p < .01$, revealed that an increase in affective empathy from fourth to eighth grade took place among girls, $F(1, 247) = 16.21, p < .001$, but not among boys, $F(1, 210) = 0.82, p > .05$.

Intercorrelations Among Study Variables

Since there were significant sex and grade differences in the study variables, partial correlations among them were computed controlling for sex and grade. The results, along with overall means and standard deviations,

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Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations Grouped by Sex and Grade

Variables	Boys (<i>n</i> = 212)				Girls (<i>n</i> = 249)			
	4th Grade (<i>n</i> = 132)		8th Grade (<i>n</i> = 80)		4th Grade (<i>n</i> = 143)		8th Grade (<i>n</i> = 106)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Defending behavior	.19	.18	.10	.11	.25	.17	.22	.17
Self-efficacy	1.57	.56	1.60	.59	1.74	.67	1.79	.64
Affective empathy	.89	.52	.82	.50	1.41	.55	1.69	.53
Cognitive empathy	1.52	.56	1.56	.52	1.69	.55	1.88	.43
Social preference	.06	.33	.01	.38	.04	.28	.09	.28
Perceived popularity	.01	.36	-.02	.43	.01	.38	.01	.47

are presented in Table 2. Defending behavior was positively correlated with affective empathy, cognitive empathy, and self-efficacy for defending. Defending was also positively associated with social preference, as well as with perceived popularity.

Cognitive, Emotional, and Interpersonal Factors in Relation to Defending Behavior

We conducted hierarchical linear regression analyses to examine, first, the assumption that self-efficacy for defending behavior, affective empathy, and two types of social status are associated with defending behavior. We also included cognitive empathy in the model in order to control for it. Second, we tested the hypothesis that interpersonal factors (social preference and perceived popularity) would moderate the associations between cognitive (self-efficacy) and emotional (affective empathy) factors and defending. The interaction terms were tested simultaneously, adding them one by one to separate equations. All continuous variables were centered by standardizing (Aiken & West, 1991) across the subjects who had no missing values on any of the study variables. As in previous analyses using peer reports, we included only the participants who had been evaluated by at least five classmates ($N = 461$). Defending behavior served as the dependent variable in all of the analyses.

At the first step, we entered sex and grade (two dummy-coded variables) in the regression equation as control variables. At the second step, we entered cognitive and emotional factors: self-efficacy and two types of

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations Among Study Variables: Correlations Controlling for Sex and Grade

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Defending	.20	.17					
2. Efficacy	1.68	.68	.14**				
3. Affective empathy	1.22	.63	.12**	.12*			
4. Cognitive empathy	1.66	.53	.10*	.19***	.42***		
5. Social preference	.07	.32	.31***	.02	.02	-.03	
6. Perceived popularity	.00	.41	.25***	.22***	.02	.31***	.43***

*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

empathy (cognitive and affective). At the third step, we entered the interpersonal variables: social preference and perceived popularity. At step four, the interaction terms between one individual variable (e.g., affective empathy) and one interpersonal variable (e.g., social preference) were added to the model one by one (separate equations). We also tested whether the individual \times interpersonal-level product terms varied by sex or grade (e.g., sex \times affective empathy \times social preference), but none of the 8 three-way interactions reached significance.

Table 3 summarizes the regression analysis for testing the hypotheses concerning the main effects (Steps 1–3) and interactions (Step 4, added to the model one by one). When controlling for sex and grade, the more efficacious and empathic students were the more likely they were to defend their victimized classmates, although the main effect of affective empathy reached only marginal significance. The interpersonal variables entered at Step 3—that is, social preference and perceived popularity—had significant positive associations with defending behavior.

We then entered the interaction terms at Step 4 (one by one in separate equations) to test the hypothesis that social preference and perceived popularity would moderate the effects of cognitive and emotional factors. Three of four interaction terms explained variance in defending behavior over and above all of the main effects in the model. More specifically, the effects of self-efficacy and affective empathy were both moderated by perceived popularity, whereas the interaction between affective empathy and social preference was marginally significant.

The nature of significant interactions was examined following the procedure suggested by Aiken and West (1991): Namely, the association between the predictor (e.g., affective empathy) and defending behavior was

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Table 3. Cognitive, Emotional, and Interpersonal Factors in Relation to Defending Behavior: Regression Analysis for Main Effects and Interactions

	β	ΔR^2	ΔF
Step 1			
Sex	-.26***		
Grade	-.16***		
		.09	22.69***
Step 2			
Self-efficacy	.12**		
Affective empathy	.11 [†]		
Cognitive empathy	.03		
		.03	5.08**
Step 3			
Social preference	.25***		
Perceived popularity	.12**		
		.10	28.14***
Step 4 ^a			
Self-efficacy × preference	.05	.00	1.57
Self-efficacy × popularity	.16***	.02	14.03***
Affective empathy × preference	.08 [†]	.01	3.62 [†]
Affective Empathy × popularity	.08*	.01	4.00*

Note. Standardized coefficients reported for the step in which predictor(s) were entered.

^a Added one by one.

*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. [†] $p < .10$.

computed at three levels of the moderator (-1 , 0 , and $+1$ *SD*). In the follow-ups, we always controlled for sex, grade, and the remaining individual, and interpersonal factors not involved in the interaction term (e.g., when following up the interaction between affective empathy and social preference, the effects of self-efficacy, cognitive empathy, and perceived popularity were also controlled for).

The results of the follow-up analyses (see Figure 1) demonstrated that self-efficacy translated into defending behavior at medium ($\beta = .10$, $p < .05$) and high ($\beta = .24$, $p < .001$) levels of perceived popularity. When perceived popularity was low, self-efficacy did not affect defending behavior. The association between affective empathy and defending was significant only under high levels of social preference ($\beta = .18$, $p < .05$) or perceived popularity ($\beta = .18$, $p < .05$; see Figures 2 and 3).

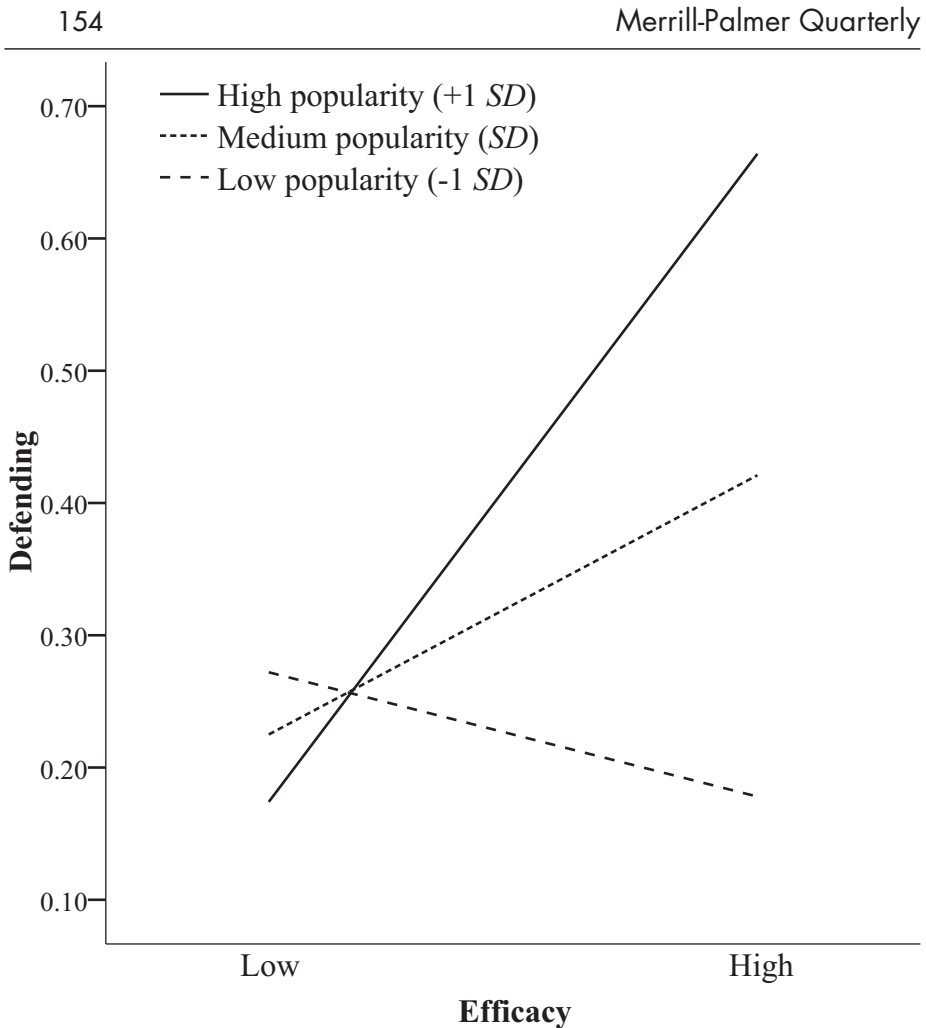


Figure 1. The association between self-efficacy for defending and peer-reported defending behavior at different levels of perceived popularity.

Discussion

No previous research on defending behavior in bullying situations has simultaneously tested cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal factors associated with helping and supporting victimized classmates. Consistent with our hypotheses, we found that defending behavior was positively associated with self-efficacy for defending, affective (but not cognitive) empathy, as well as high social status among peers. Moreover, in line with child by environment perspectives (Hodges et al., 1997; Ladd, 2003), our results showed that student's social standing in the peer group moderated the

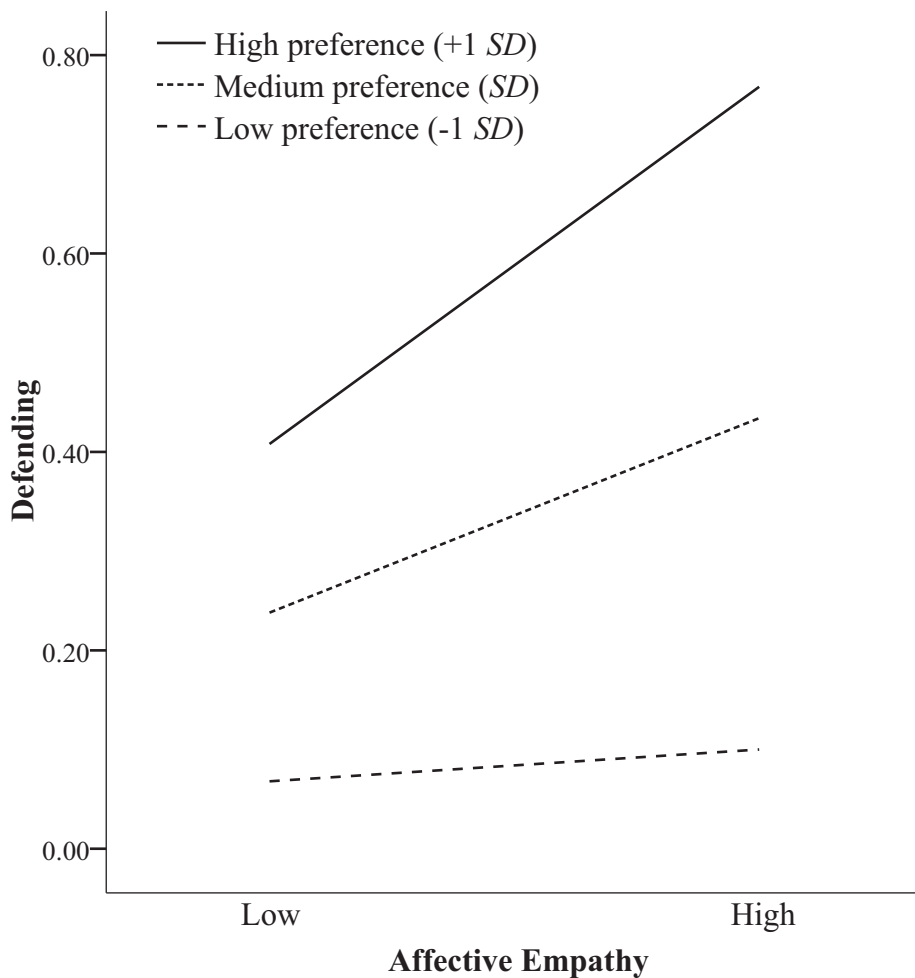


Figure 2. The association between affective empathy and peer-reported defending behavior at different levels of social preference.

effects of both self-efficacy and affective empathy on defending victimized peers. Our study uniquely contributes to the existing research on defending behavior by underlining the importance of perceived popularity in enabling youth to act upon their empathy or self-efficacy.

Our results were in line with the findings reported by Gini and colleagues (2008): The more efficacious students felt to defend victimized classmates, the more likely they were to do so. These findings differ from the results of other studies in which self-efficacy was operationalized in more general terms (Andreou & Metallidou, 2004; Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Based on these findings, it appears important to specify the efficacy

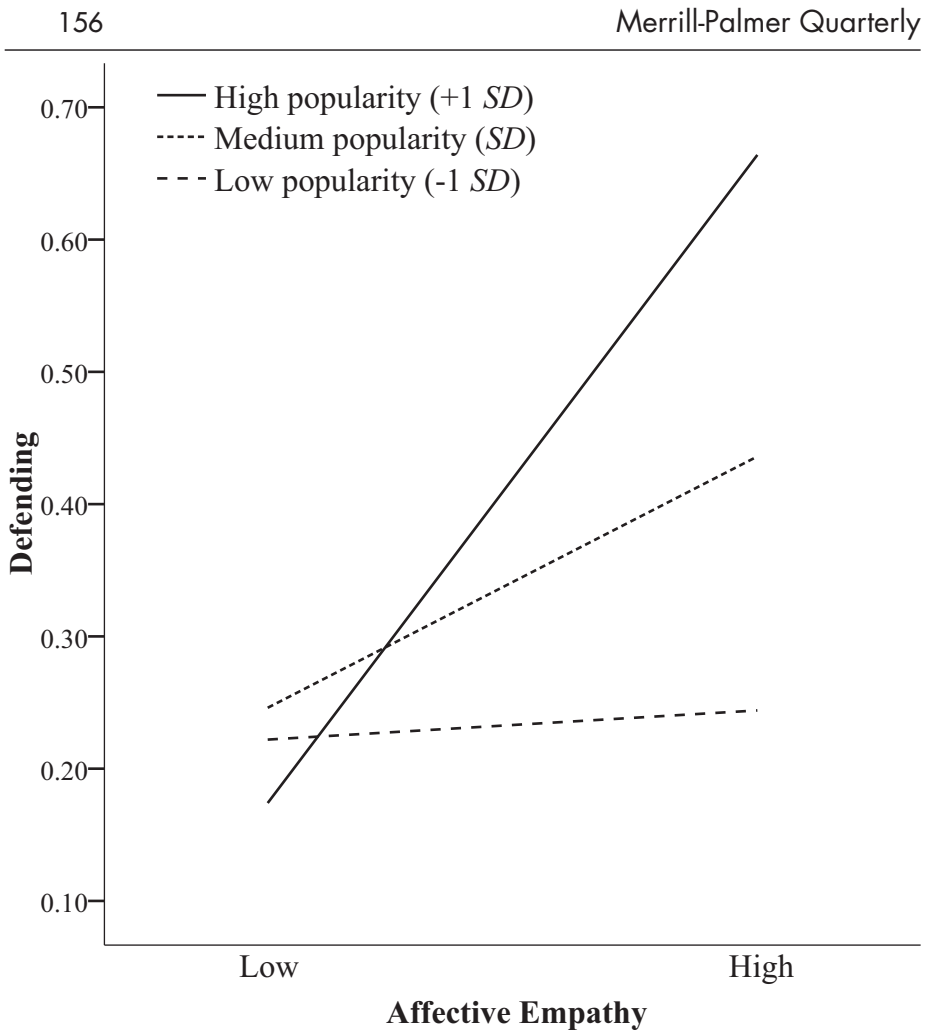


Figure 3. The association between affective empathy and peer-reported defending behavior at different levels of perceived popularity.

beliefs to the behavior in question rather than relying on generic sense of self-efficacy. In all likelihood, specific self-efficacy beliefs reflect the strategies and skills students have in order to act on behalf of the victim in bullying situations (Bandura, 1986).

Based on our findings, affective empathy was also positively associated with defending behavior, although when controlling for the effect of cognitive empathy this association reached only marginal significance. However, cognitive empathy was not related to defending behavior at all. It seems that it is likely to be the vicarious sharing of other persons' feelings, rather than cognitive understanding of those feelings, that drives the

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defending behavior. This finding is in line with Caravita and colleagues' (2009) finding and supports the view that affective and cognitive components of empathy are separate constructs with distinct correlates (Davis, 1983; Davis et al., 1994). A general empathy construct including both affective and cognitive components does not distinguish defending from passive bystanding (Gini et al., 2008). However, feeling another person's emotion is more likely to promote positive behaviors (e.g., defending the victim of bullying) toward others, whereas the knowledge of another's feelings may be used either to benefit or to harm that person. Furthermore, it might be that an even more specific kind of empathy (e.g., affective empathy toward victims of bullying) is more strongly associated with taking an action on behalf of the victim than are global levels of affective empathy that are measured irrespective of target type.

The results partially supported our main hypotheses concerning the moderating role of social preference and perceived popularity. Only perceived popularity (not social preference) moderated the effect of self-efficacy on defending. This suggests that when a student is low on perceived popularity, self-efficacy is not associated with defending. Our results also indicated that the effect of affective empathy on defending behavior is moderated by students' social standing within the peer group. The interaction term between affective empathy and social preference was marginally significant, but the result of the pattern of follow-up analysis was consistent with that found for perceived popularity. Therefore, it seems that students who experience strong empathetic feelings on behalf of another person are likely to stand up only when they are liked or when they are perceived popular within the peer group.

It should be noted that perceived popularity was a significant moderator of both self-efficacy for defending and affective empathy. Perceived popularity has been suggested to be an indicator of social power (Lease et al., 2002; Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2006). It could be that social power is needed when acting on behalf of the victim against bullies, who often have a great deal of power in the peer group (Juvonen & Galván, 2008). Social status may also protect these children from the possible negative consequences (e.g., revenge from the bully) of defending behavior and therefore they do not need to fear the possibility of becoming the next victim. Thus, not only do personal factors influence defending behavior, but social factors (social preference and perceived popularity) create a context that enables or prevents personal factors from translating into action.

We also found significant grade differences in our study variables. As expected, eighth graders were less likely to defend victims than were fourth graders but scored higher on cognitive empathy than did fourth graders. For

affective empathy, this was true only for girls. However, there were no grade differences in self-efficacy for defending. When students grow older, group norms become more approving of bullying (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). Despite their empathic feelings or the fact that they feel as capable to defend as fourth graders, eighth graders may be less likely to stand up for victims because they might also be more likely to behave in ways that are in accordance with real or (mis)perceived group norms. Although adolescents' social and cognitive skills are more developed than those of their younger counterparts, standing up for victimized peers might become more challenging when students grow older. Thus, it is not surprising that eighth graders did not feel more efficacious to defend their peers than did fourth graders.

Defending the victimized peer is usually a challenging task because it often contains a social risk: The victim of bullying frequently carries a social stigma, whereas the bully has a lot of power within the peer group (Juvonen & Galván, 2008; Salmivalli et al., 2009; Teräsahjo & Salmivalli, 2003). Therefore it is not surprising that possible reasons for not intervening in bullying situations on behalf of the victim include concern over becoming the next victim and an aim to increase one's own status by acting more like the one in power (Juvonen & Galván). Our study indeed showed that, in addition to personal factors, children's social status within the peer group is an important determinant when it comes to the ability and courage to act upon emotions and cognitions.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

There are some limitations in our study. First, our study was cross-sectional, so we cannot draw any conclusions concerning the direction of effects. For instance, even though a major tenet of social cognitive learning theory is that cognitions guide behaviors, the opposite can also be true (Bandura, 1986): That is, self-efficacy also develops through mastery experiences. Thus, it is likely that children who successfully defend victims will evidence consequential increases in perceived efficacy to defend victims. Likewise, instead of enabling defending behavior, social standing in the peer group might improve as a result of defending behavior. Investigating these associations longitudinally should be the focus of future studies. Second, all our peer-report measures were same-sex only. It would be beneficial to use the whole peer group as informants especially in the case of adolescents who tend to have both same-sex and cross-sex relationships within their school class. Third, the kind acts of high-status defenders might be more salient than those by others. Peer nominations are particularly likely to capture these salient incidents. In future studies, it would therefore be important

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to rely also on the bullied children as informants in order to identify the less visible individuals who stand up for them or support them in private. Finally, we used passive parental consent procedures in our study. It should be noted that passive consent procedures are acceptable only under special conditions (i.e., taking into account the cross-cultural variations in laws governing the protection of human subjects). Although our procedures were consistent with the regulations in Finland at the time of the data collection, these regulations are currently under review and the active consent regulations are likely to be adopted in the future.

Implications for Interventions

Gaining more knowledge about factors associated with defending behaviors is critical because encouraging students to take sides with their victimized classmates is considered an important part of antibullying programs (Salmivalli et al., 2004, 2009). It seems, indeed, that defending makes a difference. Higher levels of defending at the classroom level have been found to serve as a buffer against the risk factors (such as rejection and social anxiety) for victimization (Kärnä, Voeten, Poskiparta, & Salmivalli, in press). Furthermore, victims who have defenders among their classmates are better adjusted (i.e., are less anxious and less severely victimized, have higher self-esteem) than are victims without defenders (Sainio et al., 2008).

Based on our results, we argue that interventions should aim to teach children and adolescents effective strategies to defend victimized students and to actively encourage them to do so. Since the most influential source to develop efficacy toward a task is mastery experience (Bandura, 1986), students would benefit from hands-on experience in practicing ways to defend (e.g., role-play exercises). In addition, vicarious experience can be a source of self-efficacy and thus witnessing others successfully defend victims may also contribute to enhancing self-efficacy for defending (Bandura).

Particularly promising is also our finding that defender reputation is positively associated with both social preference and perceived popularity. Although this set of findings may seem contrary to previous research showing that many bullies are popular (e.g. Vaillancourt et al., 2003), that is not necessarily the case. Rather, we believe that social power can be associated with either negative or positive behaviors. This insight is vital when considering how best to combat high-status bullies.

Our results support the idea of aiming to mobilize especially high-status students to support victimized children. The result that both self-efficacy and affective empathy are moderated by perceived popularity clearly points out that the aim to promote self-efficacy and empathy is not enough to increase

the probability that children will defend victims. If high-status children engage in the defense of victimized students, it might also lower the threshold for others to act on their cognitions and emotions. Furthermore, it has been suggested (Juvonen & Galván, 2008; Lease et al., 2002) that through their visibility and social power, popular students are in the position to determine group norms (see also Dijkstra, Lindenberg, & Veenstra, 2008). If interventions succeed in relying on popular prosocial peers influencing others, we will be one step closer to making schools safer places for everyone.

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Defending Victimized Peers: A Contextual Analysis of Classrooms Norms and Collective
Perceptions

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Abstract

This study examined the degree to which bullying norms, sense of connectedness among the students, and perceptions of teacher's ability to deal with bullying situations account for classroom differences in students defending victimized classmates. Participants were 6,650 third- to fifth-grade children (51% boys; $M_{\text{age}} = 11.2$ years) from 382 classrooms. Multilevel modeling analyses revealed that the contextual factors were related to defending behavior over and beyond individual student characteristics (e.g., gender, empathy, defending self-efficacy). Specifically, defending was facilitated in classrooms characterized by perceptions of connectedness among students and teachers' antibullying reactions. In contrast, students were less likely to defend in classrooms where bullying was associated with social power. Implications for bullying prevention are discussed.

Defending Victimized Peers: A Contextual Analysis of Classrooms Norms and Collective Perceptions

Standing up for a victim of bullying is a powerful act that not only alleviates the distress of a victim, but also helps stop bullying behavior (Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig, 2001; Sainio, Veenstra, Huitsing, Salmivalli, 2011). Defending, defined as taking a stand on behalf of the victim by directly stepping in, seeking help, or comforting the victim (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004), is rare, however. Despite disapproving attitudes of bullying behaviors, bystanders infrequently stand up for their victimized classmates (Hawkins et al., 2001; Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, 1996). This is not surprising in light of the evidence demonstrating the social power and popularity of bullies (Caravita, Di Blasio, & Salmivalli, 2009; Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004; Cillessen & Rose, 2005; Lease, Kennedy, & Axelrod, 2002; Newcomb, Bukowski, & Pattee, 1993; Parkhurst & Hopmeyer, 1998; Juvonen, Wang & Espinoza, in press; Sandstrom & Cillessen, 2006). Because of the potential negative ramifications of standing up to the powerful bullies (see Juvonen and Galván, 2008; Salmivalli & Peets, 2008 for reviews), it is critical to understand both the individual characteristics of the defenders as well as the characteristics of the larger peer context that might help or hinder any bystander to stand up for a victim of bullying.

In an effort to understand what enables students to defend their victimized peers (and what prevents them from doing so) researchers have identified several individual attributes that contribute to students' willingness to stand up for their victimized peers. However, much less attention has been paid to the contextual factors, for example classroom characteristics that might influence to defending behavior. Classrooms are among the most salient developmental contexts in children's lives (see e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A good deal of time is spent with the

classmates and, perhaps more importantly, victims and peer bystanders do not have choice over their classmates. Gaining more knowledge about the classroom characteristics that play a role in defending behavior is particularly important for the purposes of developing effective antibullying programs: in order to target the whole group effectively we need to know specifically, which group level factors are likely to contribute to defending behavior and how. In line with the social-ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; see also Rodkin & Gest, 2011; Rodkin & Hodges, 2003; Swearer & Espelage, 2004) this study is designed to shed a light on both individual and classroom level characteristics that contribute to children's willingness to stand up for their victimized peers. We consider positive youth outcomes (i.e., defending behavior) to result from characteristics of peer ecology (i.e., norms, connectedness among students) and teacher-student interactions (i.e., perceptions of teachers' reactions to bullying) even after controlling for the important individual level predictors (Rodkin & Gest, 2011).

Individual level Factors Associated with Defending Behavior

Most studies examining defending behavior investigate individual level characteristics. Not surprisingly, empathy plays an important role in determining whether a peer defends the victimized classmates (Barchia & Bussey, 2011; Caravita et al., 2009; Gini, Albiero, Benelli, & Altoè, 2007; Pöyhönen, Juvonen, & Salmivalli, 2010). Specifically, affective component of empathy – feeling another person's emotion – is associated with defending behavior (Barchia & Bussey, 2011; Caravita et al., 2009; Pöyhönen et al., 2010). Additionally, social self-efficacy (i.e., students' perception of being competent in social situations) and more specifically measured self-efficacy to defend the victim of bullying increase the probability of defending (Gini, Albiero, Benelli, & Altoè, 2008; Pöyhönen et al., 2010; Pöyhönen, Juvonen, & Salmivalli, 2012). In their study with adolescents Gini and colleagues (2008) discovered that social self-

efficacy was the key component that differentiated defending behavior from passive bystanding. Finally, social status or perceived popularity predicts defending (Caravita et al., 2009; Pöyhönen et al., 2010). In as much as bullies often have a high social status (Caravita et al., 2009; Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004; Cillessen & Rose, 2005; Lease et al., 2002; Newcomb et al., 1993; Parkhurst & Hopmeyer, 1998; Sandstrom & Cillessen, 2006) it is not surprising that perceived popularity increases the likelihood of standing up to the bully (Caravita et al., 2009; Pöyhönen et al., 2010). In other words, it appears that similar high status classmates are in the best position to challenge those who bully.

Potential Contextual Factors Associated with Defending Behavior

Besides individual factors, classroom characteristics are likely to play a role in defending behavior. Indeed, recent studies (Kärnä, Voeten, Poskiparta, & Salmivalli, 2010¹; Pozzoli, Gini, & Vieno, 2012; Salmivalli & Voeten 2004; Salmivalli, Voeten, & Poskiparta, 2011²) have shown that defending behaviors vary across classrooms. Researchers have identified classroom level factors that contribute to defending behavior, including provictim attitudes as well as injunctive and descriptive norms (Pozzoli, Gini, & Vieno, 2012, Salmivalli, Voeten, & Poskiparta, 2011; Salmivalli & Voeten 2004). In the present paper we focus on two types of norms, that is *descriptive norms* and *social prestige norms*. Descriptive norms refer to what most students in the classroom do: When group members display a certain behavior frequently it is seen as expected way to behave within that specific group. The more students display probullying behaviors (e.g., aggression, assisting the bully, reinforcing the bully) the more common bullying (and victimization) are (Mercer, McMillen, & DeRosier, 2009; Thomas, Bierman, Powers, & The Conduct Problems research Group, 2011; Nocentini, Menesini, & Salmivalli, 2013; Salmivalli, Voeten, & Poskiparta, 2011). Descriptive norms favoring bullying can also inhibit

defending behavior at the group level (Salmivalli et al., Voeten, & Poskiparta, 2011; Espelage, Green, & Polanin, 2011). In a recent study by Salmivalli and colleagues (2011), the frequency of bullying at the classroom level was negatively associated with defending. Similarly, Espelage and colleagues (2012) found that greater bullying frequency within one's peer group was associated with less willingness to intervene over and beyond individual level predictors (attitudes towards bullying, empathy) among preadolescent males. There is evidence, however, that descriptive norms of defending and positive attitudes toward victims are even better predictors of defending behavior than descriptive norms about bullying (Pozzoli et al., 2012).

Norms in the classroom may not be determined simply by frequency of bullying. Not all students in the classroom are in equal position to influence the normative context (e.g., Dijkstra, Lindenberg and Veenstra, 2008). Thus, in addition to descriptive norms, we considered defending behavior to be influenced by *social prestige norms* (Galvan, Spatzier & Juvonen, 2011; see also Henry, Guerra, Huesmann, Tolan, Van Acker, & Eron, 2000; Rodkin & Gest, 2011 for the concept of norm salience). Social prestige refers to the perceived values or social rewards (e.g., perceived popularity) associated with any particular behaviors. In the present study we apply this approach to bullying behavior of popular students (i.e., within classroom correlation between bullying and perceived popularity). Although bullying behaviors are likely to be related to high perceived popularity (Caravita et al., 2009; Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004; Cillessen & Rose, 2005; Lease, et al., 2002; Newcomb, et al., 1993; Parkhurst & Hopmeyer, 1998; Sandstrom & Cillessen, 2006), classrooms differ in the strength of such association. Classroom norms may be set by just a few popular students, and when their behavior is directed towards negative behaviors (i.e., bullying), positive behaviors (i.e., defending) may be hindered.

In addition to perceptions of the frequency or the status promoting role of (bullying or defending) behaviors, other types of *collective perceptions* are likely to be related to the likelihood of bystanders defending the victim. For instance, Barchia & Bussey (2011) found that greater collective beliefs in the ability of students and teachers to work together to stop bullying predicted higher level of self-reported defending one year later (while controlling for personal self-efficacy for defending and empathy) at the individual level. But in addition to these specific perceptions of the collective's response to bullying, also sense of connectedness may be adequate to boost defending (McEvoy & Welker, 2000; Carlo, Fabes, Laible, & Kupanoff, 1999). If students feel they are a close-knit community, they are more likely to behave in altruistic ways. Specifically, when students feel close to one another, they may be more likely to risk their own safety or reputation as they defend a victim.

In addition to classmates, teachers have an important role in influencing which behaviors are accepted and encouraged in the school class (e.g., Farmer, Lines, & Hamm, 2011; Rodkin & Gest, 2011). In school classes in which homeroom teachers disapprove bullying, and also act upon those beliefs, victimization is less common and students incline to intervene on behalf of the victim more often than in the classrooms where teachers report to be more tolerant to bullying (e.g., Hektner & Swenson, 2012). In the present study we examine students' understanding of their teachers' reactions to bullying instead of teachers' evaluation of their own beliefs and behaviors, inasmuch as it is these subjective views that are more likely to affect student behavior (see Den Brok, Bergen, Stahl, & Brekelmans, 2004).

Unlike norms, which can be only represented on the level of collective, perceptions may operate simultaneously on the level of an individual and the level of collective (e.g., Brok, Bregelmans, & Wubbels, 2007; Lütke, Robitzh, Trautwein, & Kunter, 2009; Waters, Cross, &

Shaw, 2010). Both individual and the collective (i.e., aggregate) perceptions may be related to defending behavior (Pozzoli et al., 2012; see also Farmer, Lines, & Hamm, 2011). Students who have close relationships with their classmates or personal beliefs of their teacher's antibullying actions (Rigby & Bagshaw, 2003) might be more likely to defend the victimized classmates. At the same time, shared perceptions or beliefs may also predict classroom differences, inasmuch as defending should be promoted in classrooms where students perceive their teachers to have antibullying attitudes and be efficacious at tackling bullying. Similarly, shared perceptions of classmate connectedness ought to increase the likelihood of standing up for the victimized peers (even after controlling for individual perceptions) and thus help account for classroom differences.

Current Study

Guided by a social-ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; see also Rodkin & Gest, 2011; Rodkin & Hodges, 2003; Swearer & Espelage, 2004), the current study examined the effects of both individual level and contextual factors (classroom level factors) on defending behavior. Our main focus was on classroom level characteristics – norms and perceptions. However, in order to test the independent role of contextual factors, we controlled for several theoretically relevant individual level covariates (i.e., age, gender, self-efficacy for defending, affective and cognitive empathy toward the victim, perceived popularity). Two specific hypotheses about the classroom level effects were tested. First, we expected that in classrooms where the levels of bullying were high (*descriptive norm about bullying*) and bullying was positively related to perceived popularity (*social prestige norm about bullying*), students would be less likely to engage in defending behavior. Second, we anticipated that defending is facilitated in classrooms where children perceived positive connectedness among the each other

(i.e., having good friends and getting along with classmates) and had positive perceptions of teachers' antibullying attitudes and actions about intervening in bullying situations. As we were interested in whether classroom level effects would differ from individual level associations, we estimated these associations at the individual as well as classroom level. That is, we wanted to find out whether perceived connectedness among all the students in the class and shared perceptions of teachers' antibullying actions further explained defending at the level of school class.

Method

Participants

We used pretest data from the KiVa bullying intervention program. Data were collected in May 2007 and the initial sample included a total of 8,237 third- to fifth-grade students ($M_{age} = 11.2$ years) from 429 classrooms. A total of 7,491 students (90.9% of the target sample) received active parental consent to participate. To increase the reliability of peer reports, we excluded the classrooms where fewer than 6 students had filled out the questionnaires ($n = 47$). Altogether, our final sample included 6,650 third- to fifth-grade students (51% boys; $M_{age} = 11.2$ years) from 382 classrooms (average class size was 22.1 students).

Procedure

The data were collected through Internet-based questionnaires. Testing sessions were held during regular school hours at computer labs under the supervision of teachers. Each school had access to computers. Teachers were given detailed instructions concerning the procedure two weeks prior to the data collection. If teachers had any questions or concerns, they could obtain support via phone or e-mail. The order of the questionnaires as well as the order of the items within questionnaires were randomized.

At the beginning of the testing session, the term bullying was defined to students. The definition included three main components of bullying: intent to harm, repeated nature and imbalance of power (see e.g., Olweus, 1999). Teachers read the definition out loud and students were then asked to read the same definition from their computer screens. Additionally, a shortened version of the definition (i.e., “It is bullying, when a person is made repeatedly feel bad on purpose”) always appeared on the upper part of the computer screen when students responded to bullying related questions (i.e., Participant Role Questionnaire).

Measures

Defending and bullying behavior. Defending and bullying behaviors were measured by means of the Participant Role Questionnaire (PRQ) (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). *Defender scale* consists of three items describing the behaviors that reflect defending and supporting the victim in bullying situations (i.e., “Tries to make others stop bullying”; “Comforts the victim or encourages him/her to tell the teacher about the bullying”; “Tells others to stop bullying or says that bullying is stupid”). *Bullying scale* includes three items (i.e., “Starts bullying”; “Makes the others join in the bullying”; “Always finds new ways of harassing the victim”). Participants were given a class roster and asked to nominate an unlimited number of classmates who fit the description in an item. For each participant, nominations were tallied for each item and divided by the number of estimators. Finally, two scores were created by averaging across the three defending and three bullying items. Internal consistency of both scales was good (Defending: Cronbach’s $\alpha = .92$; Bullying: Cronbach’s $\alpha = .91$). Scores could range from 0 to 1.

Perceived popularity. To assess perceived popularity, participants nominated up to three classmates they perceived as most popular (i.e., “Who are the most popular [students] in your

class?”). For each student, the number of nominations was tallied and divided by the number of nominators. Scores could vary from 0 to 1.

Affective and cognitive empathy towards the victim of bullying. A seven-item measure was used to assess empathy (Kärnä, Voeten, Little, Poskiparta, Kaljonen, & Salmivalli, 2011). Affective empathy was measured with four items that assess the degree to which students share the victim’s feelings (e.g., “When the bullied student is sad, I also feel sad”). Cognitive empathy was tapped by three items that measure the degree to which students understand the victim’s feelings (e.g., “e.g., I can understand how the bullied student must feel”). Responses were provided on a 4-point scale (from 0 = never true to 3 = always true). Scores for both scales were averaged across the respective items. Higher scores reflect greater empathy. Internal consistencies were .85 and .75 for affective and cognitive empathy, respectively.

Self-efficacy beliefs for defending behavior. To assess self-efficacy beliefs for defending behavior (Pöyhönen & Salmivalli, 2008), students were asked to evaluate how easy or difficult it would be for them to defend the victim of bullying (three items; e.g., “Trying to make the others stop the bullying would be 0 = very easy... 3 = very difficult for me”). The item content was parallel to the PRQ items. Answers were reverse coded, so that higher scores indicated greater self-efficacy for defending. Finally, scores were averaged across the three items (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .69$).

Connectedness to classmates. Connectedness to classmates was assessed with three items (e.g., “I feel it is easy to get along with my classmates”). Scores were averaged across items (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .81$) with higher scores indicating more positive perceptions of the relationships. Ratings were provided on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 (completely disagree) to 4 (completely agree).

Perceptions of teacher’s reactions to bullying. Four questions were used to measure students’ perceptions of their teacher’s reactions to bullying; attitudes towards bullying (i.e., “What does your teacher think of bullying?”), efforts to decrease bullying (i.e., “Has the teacher touched the issue of bullying during some lesson since last fall?”; “How much has the teacher done to decrease bullying since last fall?”;”), and efficacy in reducing bullying (i.e., “How much can the teacher do in order to decrease bullying?”). Ratings were provided on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 to 4. Response options varied depending on the item. Options included teacher thinking that bullying is a good thing...absolutely wrong; not touching the issue of bullying...giving lessons more than eight times; nothing...very much, respectively. Scores were averaged across the items ($\alpha = .63$). Higher score reflects students’ perceiving their teacher to take more antibullying actions and being more efficacious at doing so.

Creating contextual variables. To test the descriptive norm and social prestige norm hypotheses, we created two new classroom level variables. First, a classroom level indicator of bullying was derived by averaging individual bullying scores for each classroom (scores could vary between 0 and 1). Second, we computed a correlation between bullying and popularity for each classroom (correlations could vary from -1 to 1). In addition, we created a connectedness index by aggregating individual scores on the connectedness to classmates measure in each classroom. Finally, a similar procedure was done to create a classroom measure of perceptions of teachers’ reactions to bullying.

Results

Analysis Strategy

We used multilevel modeling to take into account the interdependence of observations (students nested in classrooms). Defending served as the criterion variable. Age, gender,

ffective and cognitive empathy, self-efficacy, perceived popularity, connectedness to classmates and perceptions of teacher’s reactions to bullying served as within (individual-) level covariates. Mean age, class size, proportion of boys, aggregate levels of bullying, popularity-bullying correlation (capturing the prestige norm of bullying), connectedness among the students in the classroom, and perceptions of teachers’ reactions to bullying served as between (classroom-) level covariates (means and standard deviations of study variables are presented in Table 1). All covariates were grand-mean centered. By grand-mean centering individual level covariates, classroom level associations were estimated after controlling for the effects of these variables (i.e., when predicting between classroom differences in defending, classrooms have been equated with regard to student level variables; see Enders & Tofghi, 2007). In addition, as perceptions of connectedness and teacher’s reactions to bullying were included at both levels, classroom level associations reflect contextual effects (the degree to which classroom level estimates differ from student level effects; see Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002).

Associations Among Study Constructs

Two aspects of individual level correlations are noteworthy (see Table 2). First, all constructs, except for age, were significantly associated in anticipated ways with defending. Second, many of the predictors were significantly correlated with each other but the magnitude of these associations suggests that these constructs were relatively independent of each other. As for classroom level correlations (see Table 3), five out of seven predictor–outcome associations were significant (proportion of boys and aggregate levels of bullying did not relate to defending). In addition, social prestige norm about bullying was negatively related to collective perceptions of teachers’ reactions to bullying. This suggests that the more strongly bullying was associated with greater social power, the more likely the students were to be pessimistic about the role of

teachers in effectively dealing with bullying. There was also a strong negative correlation between descriptive norm about bullying and perceived connectedness among students, suggesting that students felt less connected to each other in the classrooms where bullying was more common.

Multilevel Analyses

Empty model. We first ran an empty model (without any student- or classroom level covariates) to explore the degree to which defending varied between classrooms. Within- and between-level variance estimates were .014 and .008, respectively (both were significant at $p < .05$). Intraclass correlation (ICC) was .37, indicating that 37% of the variance in defending behavior was due to differences between the classrooms (or similarity among the classmates).

Random-coefficient model. Next, we added individual level covariates to our previous model (see Table 4 for the results). Students who felt more affective empathy toward the victim and who had higher efficacy beliefs for defending were more likely to engage in defending behavior. Also, students who were considered more popular by their classmates were more likely to stand up for their victimized peers. Furthermore, students who felt connected to their classmates and positive perceptions of their teacher's reactions to bullying were more likely to defend their victimized peers. In addition, girls were more likely to defend their classmates than boys.

Intercept-as-outcome model. Finally, we included classroom level covariates in the model (see Table 4). The results show that the likelihood of defending was higher in classrooms where bullying was negatively associated with popularity (or defending was inhibited in classrooms where bullies were considered popular among their classmates). We also found that defending behaviors were facilitated in classrooms characterized by high connectedness among

students and where students held positive perceptions about their teachers' bullying efficacy and intervention efforts. Most importantly, when the model included collective perceptions of teachers' reactions to bullying, individual perceptions were no longer significant. Thus, it is shared perceptions, rather than individual perceptions, about teachers' efforts and actions that play an important role in defending behaviors. Finally, defending was less likely to take place in classrooms that contained older students and that were bigger in size.

Discussion

This study was designed to examine contextual factors (norms and collective perceptions) that were expected to either enable or inhibit children to support their victimized classmates over and above the individual characteristics of the defenders. Consistent with previous social-ecological perspectives of children's social behavior (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979; see also Rodkin & Gest, 2011; Rodkin & Hodges, 2003; Swearer & Espelage, 2004), our findings suggest that classroom context plays an important role in influencing students' defending behavior. More specifically, the probability of defending can be increased or decreased depending on the social power assigned to bullies as well as collective perceptions of connectedness and teachers' antibullying efforts.

First, our results showed that aggregate levels of bullying (*descriptive norm about bullying*) were not related to defending, whereas defending behavior was inhibited in classrooms where bullying was positively related to perceived popularity (i.e., bullies were popular). Our results are in line with previous findings by showing that the behavior displayed by popular students is more influential than the overall behavioral norm of the group (Dijkstra et al., 2008). These findings suggest that students do not equally observe the behavior of all classmates, but are influenced by the behavior of their popular peers. When their behavior is directed towards

negative behaviors (i.e., bullying), positive behaviors (i.e., defending) are hindered. The distinction between these two types of norms (*descriptive norms* vs. *social prestige norms*) might further clarify the results concerning the impact of norms on children's social behavior (e.g., Henry et al., 2000; Mercerer et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011). Our results suggests that standing up for a victim might be particularly challenging in classrooms where bullying is associated with high status (Dijkstra et al., 2008). It is plausible that in classrooms where bullies are popular, defending behavior becomes particularly risky. In other words, although bystanders may feel for the victim, they may not defend victimized classmates in order to protect their own status (see e.g., Juvonen & Galván, 2008). Moreover, when bullying is enacted by popular students, it may become instrumental for achieving a valued goal of high social status and thereby encourage modeling or emulation of bullying behaviors (Dijkstra, Cillessen, Lindenberg, & Veenstra, 2010; Juvonen & Ho, 2008; Olthof & Goossens, 2007). In those types of settings defending might be perceived to go against (or challenge) the power hierarchy and prestige values of the collective.

Second, the current findings further underscore that both individual as well as collective perceptions of connectedness can facilitate defending behavior. The classroom level effect of connectedness among the classmates means that if we compare two students who perceive to get along with others equally well, the student who attends the classroom with greater perceived connectedness is more likely to engage in defending behavior than the student who attends the classroom where children are less connected to each other. Thus, connectedness among all the students in the classroom creates a safe context that enables students to stand up for their victimized classmates. It is also possible that when students feel affiliated with each other, defending behavior is less risky. In classrooms characterized by positive and trusting relationships, students have positive means to connect to each other and they do not need to

create cohesion and connectedness within the group by taking part in negative behaviors, such as bullying (see e.g., Garandeau & Cillessen, 2006; Farmer, Petrin, Robertson, Eraser, Hall, Day, & Dadisman, 2010; Juvonen & Galván, 2008), but they can continue maintaining and further establishing connectedness in more prosocial means.

We also found that defending was facilitated in classrooms where students shared positive perceptions of their teachers' reactions to bullying (i.e., they felt that the teacher tackled bullying and was efficacious at doing so). Interestingly, individual perceptions of teacher's beliefs and actions were not associated with defending behavior after considering collective perceptions. These findings imply that it is not enough for a single student to have confidence in their teacher handling bullying incidents. That collective perceptions matter more than individual beliefs may not be so surprising. Perceptions that are shared among most of the classmates are likely to reflect a classroom ethos or climate (similar to what we discussed about connectedness) where bullying is less tolerated and intervening is less risky for students. These are likely to have developed via teachers' consistent enforcement of antibullying actions (see a review by Durlak & DuPre, 2008).

The cross-sectional design does not allow us to make inferences about the direction of the effects. The influence of contextual factors may be a bi-directional one. For instance, connectedness among the students creates an atmosphere that enables students to defend their victimized peers. But, it could also be that high levels of defending foster connectedness among the students. Investigating these associations longitudinally should be the focus of future studies. Second, we focused on limited age-range. Whether similar processes apply to younger and older students awaits further empirical testing. For instance, it would be especially important to study the influence of norms on defending behavior among older students because aggression (or

bullying) is more strongly associated with popularity in older grades (LaFontana & Cillessen, 2010).

Implications for Interventions

Our findings suggest that in addition to individual characteristics (e.g., empathy towards the victims, efficacy to defend, and connectedness to classmates), bystander can be empowered to actively support and defend victimized peers classroom norms regarding bullying and collective perceptions. Standing up for a victim seems to be particularly challenging in classrooms where bullying is associated with high status (Dijkstra et al., 2008). Thus, influencing the behavior of bystanders can reduce the rewards gained by bullies and consequently, their motivation to bully in the first place. For instance, supporting students to verbalize their private attitudes, that are often against bullying (Boulton, Trueman, & Flemington, 2002; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Rigby & Slee, 1991; Whitney, Nabuzoka, & Smith, 1992), may reduce development of false norms, a process labeled as pluralistic ignorance, that only represent the attitudes of popular bullies (see e.g., Juvonen & Galván, 2008).

Furthermore, the homeroom teacher has an important role in creating a context in which defending and supporting the victimized classmates is safe (see also Farmer et al., 2011). This underscores the need for teachers to be aware of bullying and the need to have tools that help them create and maintain positive classroom norms and good relationships among students. It is also crucial for the teachers to be consistent in manifesting their antibullying attitudes and effectively tackling bullying situations. Such a consistency in expressed attitudes and behaviors increases the likelihood that students collectively share the idea that teachers are effective in dealing with bullying incidents, which in turn promotes defending behavior. There is evidence that teachers who receive training and support are more attuned to student peer groups and have

more positive management of classroom social dynamics (Hamm, Farmer, Dedisman, Gravelle, & Murray, 2011). Hence, providing professional development and support may be a critical part of classroom social climate change.

In terms of antibullying interventions, our results support the idea that antibullying interventions should, indeed, include universal actions (i.e., activities that target the whole school class). This can be achieved through a series of student lessons (see e.g., Hawkins et al., 2001; Pepler, Craig, & O’Connell, 2010; Salmivalli, Kärnä, & Poskiparta, 2010). Also, teachers would need to receive concrete tools in terms of a complete teacher’s manual with specific exercises for student lessons, because this is likely to increase teachers’ perceptions of bullying as a serious problem and their efficacy to tackle bullying (Ahtola, Haataja, Kärnä, Poskiparta, & Salmivalli, 2012). Finally, doing activities (e.g., practicing safe strategies to support the victim) together as a group is also likely to enhance connectedness among the students—a non-risky environment that facilitates defending behavior.

In sum, the findings of the current study demonstrate the power of contextual factors when accounting for defending behaviors. Our results suggest that over and above empathic feelings, sense of efficacy, and individual perceptions of the connectedness, group norms and collective perceptions are related to defending victimized peers. In school settings, classroom ethos affected by teachers (who are in the position to condemn and encourage specific actions) and peer group values deserve increased attention. By investigating such contextual factors, we are in a better position to understand and account for differences in social behaviors among classrooms.

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Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of Study Variables

Variable	M	SD
Individual level		
Defending behavior	.20	.14
Age	11.2	.90
Gender	.49	.49
Affective empathy	1.84	.73
Cognitive empathy	2.26	.63
Defending self-efficacy	1.80	.73
Perceived popularity	.16	.18
Connectedness to classmates	3.50	.72
Perceived teacher's reactions	2.60	.74
Classroom level		
Defending	.19	.09
Proportion of boys	.49	.12
Class size	22.1	5.06
Descriptive norm about bullying	.29	.04
Social prestige norm about bullying	.13	.29
Connectedness among classmates	3.49	.23
Perceived teachers' reactions	2.58	.32

Note. Girl = 0; Boy = 1. Sample size for the individual level was 6,650.

Sample size for the classroom level was 382.

Table 2. *Within Level Correlations Among Study Variables*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Defending								
2. Age	.02							
3. Gender	-.52 ***	-.02						
4. Affective empathy	.30 ***	-.07 ***	-.28 ***					
5. Cognitive empathy	.16 ***	-.07 ***	-.13 ***	.58 ***				
6. Defending self-efficacy	.11 ***	.04	-.07 ***	.20 ***	.17 ***			
7. Perceived popularity	.19 ***	.03 *	-.07 ***	-.01 ***	-.02	.07 ***		
8. Connectedness to classmates	.10 ***	-.01	.02	.11 ***	.12 ***	.18 ***	.10 ***	
9. Perceived teacher's reactions	.08 ***	-.05	.05 **	.19 ***	.12 ***	.12 ***	.00	.19 ***

Note. Girl = 0; Boy = 1. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Table 3. *Between Level Correlations Among Study Variables*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Defending							
2. Mean age	-.17**						
3. Proportion of boys	.03	-.04					
4. Class Size	-.17*	.03	-.27***				
5. Descriptive norm about bullying	-.11	-.11	.26***	-.37***			
6. Social prestige norm about bullying	-.19**	.19**	.03	.06	.08		
7. Connectedness among classmates	.21***	.21***	-.22***	.36***	-.58***	-.05	
8. Perceived teachers' reactions	.24***	.24***	-.01	.19***	-.02	-.14***	.23***

Note. *Girl = 0; Boy = 1.* *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Table 4. Summary of Multilevel Analyses for Predicting Defending Behavior

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Initial Model</i>		<i>Final Model</i>	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
Individual level				
Age	-.002	.003	-.002	.003
Gender	-.113***	.002	-.113***	.002
Affective empathy	.024***	.002	.024***	.002
Cognitive empathy	-.001	.002	-.001	.002
Defending self-efficacy	.004*	.002	.004*	.002
Perceived popularity	.143***	.007	.140***	.007
Connectedness to classmates	.009***	.002	.008***	.002
Perceived teacher's reactions	.004*	.002	.003	.002
Classroom level				
Mean age			-.011*	.006
Proportion of boys			.017	.032
Class size			-.005***	.001
Descriptive norm about bullying			-.181	.121
Social prestige norm about bullying			-.028*	.014
Connectedness among classmates			.062**	.010
Perceived teachers' reactions			.061***	.014
	<i>Residual Variances</i>		<i>Residual Variances</i>	
Within level	.009***	.000	.009***	.000
Between level	.007***	.000	.006***	.000

Note. Girl = 0; Boy = 1. Unstandardized coefficients are reported; BIC (Bayesian Information Criterion) for the Initial Model = -11.455.729; BIC for the Final Model = -11.535.039. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Footnotes

^{1,2}These studies utilized the same sample as the present study.