

**A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON THE EFFECTS OF SCHOOL BULLYING
FROM THE FRAMEWORK OF JURGEN HABERMAS'S THEORY OF COMMUNICATIVE
ACTION**

by

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Abstract**SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON THE EFFECTS OF SCHOOL BULLYING
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ACTION****by****Gary Kogan****Adviser: Professor Miriam Abramovitz**

This project is a systematic review of the US quantitative, empirical studies on the effects of school bullying for the purpose of determining the degree to which Jurgen Habermas's social theory, the theory of communicative action, can be used to understand the constellation of measured effects. School bullying is defined as a systematic abuse of power: the empirical literature on school bullying, therefore, provides a large data set on the abuse of power. The review finds strong consistency between the theory and the results of selected studies suggesting that Habermas's theory of communicative action can explain and predict the mechanisms through which the bullying experience can affect the targeted child.

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INTRODUCTION

This study will build theory on the problem of school bullying¹, defined for the purpose of the study as the enduring impingement of the autonomy of one or more children by one or more peers with greater power such that it is not feasible for the victims to either stop or change the interaction². The social theory of German philosopher and critical theorist Jurgen Habermas--the theory of communicative action--will be used as the conceptual framework for understanding the nature of bullying and its effects. This project will attempt to determine whether and to what degree his theory can explain all or part of the bullying phenomenon.

Bullying is a ubiquitous phenomenon within the developed countries in which it has been studied, occurring at similar rates across social and economic strata (Nansel et al., 2001). Estimates of the prevalence of bullying vary from 7% to 35% based on different definitions of the phenomenon used in different studies, with variation in prevalence most likely due to local school and community effects (Olweus, 1993; Sharp, Thompson, Arora, & Cho, 2000).

Bullying among children is commonly characterized as “school bullying” because school is the venue where children, by legal mandate, congregate, thus school becomes the focus of social scientific research for several academic disciplines. Children are not free to withdraw from school of their own volition if they are being bullied, and most parents have few schools they can choose from to send their children to. For many children school is the only venue in which they interact with non-family members or

¹ The term “bullying” will be used in this paper in lieu of “peer victimization.” The two terms are used synonymously in the literature, but “bullying” is the more commonly used term.

² This definition was distilled from the various definitions and aspects of the bullying phenomenon elaborated in the Definitions section below.

people outside their religious or ethnic communities, making school the primary non-family venue for social reproduction, the process of instilling social values, language, and meaning (Habermas, 1987).

School bullying is a complex phenomenon that is comprised of several types of behaviors that occur among schoolchildren for a variety of motivations (Arora, 1996). Bullying takes place at different levels of social interaction, from one-on-one aggression to, more frequently, group levels where a regular audience to the bullying behavior gathers (Bukowski & Adams, 2005; Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, 1996). Two factors distinguish bullying from other forms of peer aggression: an imbalance of power between the bully and victim and the endurance of the bullying over time (Arora, 1994; Craig & Pepler, 2003; Rigby, 2002b; Rivers, Duncan, & Besag, 2007; P. K. Smith & Sharp, 1994). The aggressive acts of bullying all share the quality of enforcing a limitation on the victim's autonomy in physical, psychological, and social domains. The techniques of bullying are evolving with the availability of new technology (Li, 2006; Mishna, 2007).

Three decades of research have shown that bullying is associated with an array of debilitating consequences (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Mynard, Joseph, & Alexander, 2000; Nishina, Juvonen, & Witkow, 2005; Olweus, 1980; Rigby & Slee, 2001; Erling Roland, 2002; Sharp et al., 2000; Shellard & Turner, 2004) for both victims and their bullies. Bullying contributes to problems with school climate, depressing academic scores for the individual child and the school (Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2000; Schwartz, Hopmeyer Gorman, Nakamoto, & Toblin, 2005; S. W. Twemlow, 2004; Wentzel & Asher., 1995). Bullying experiences have been found to be associated with depression

(Haynie et al., 2001; Hunter, Boyle, & Warden, 2007; Morrow, Hubbard, Rubin, & McAuliffe, 2008; D. J. Pepler & Craig, 1995; Erling Roland, 2002), anxiety (Baldry, 2004; Craig, 1998; Slee, 1994) ; aggression (Berthold & Hoover, 2000); and suicidal ideation and attempts (Brunstein Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2008; Carney, 2000; Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpela, Marttunen, Rimpela, & Rantanen, 1999; Omigbodun, Dogra, Esan, & Adedokun, 2008; Rigby, 1998; Erling Roland, 2002); and avoidance of school for the victim (B.J. Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Omigbodun et al., 2008). Limited evidence indicates that bullying experiences, particularly on the part of the aggressor, contribute to future violence (2007; Garbarino & Bedard, 2002; Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Modzeleski, 2002).

This study will build a theory about the mechanism of effect in bullying both to guide social work practice in the specific problem of bullying and to contribute knowledge to the field about dealing with other forms of oppression. By examining the processes by which experiences of victimization affect children over time, this study will address Finkelhor's (1995, 2007a) suggestion that a theory needs to be developed to explain how victimization affects development. Finkelhor uses the term "developmental victimology," but he himself has not pursued this theoretical project. The research into school bullying shows that many children who experience frequent abuse and humiliation at the hands of someone more powerful than themselves will also experience changes in their self-perception, sense of safety, mood or social life. These experiences can be understood as forms of oppression which social work as a profession, and critical social work in particular, is mandated to address.

The desire to end oppression is found within critical theory and the related critical social work. Walter Benjamin, an early critical theorist, felt that the social world should be constituted in a way that allows people to construct their selves and relationships free of domination (Meehan, 1994). Bullying can be understood to be one form of oppression that can adversely affect children's development. Intervening with bullying fits the mandate of critical social work (Fook, 1993, 2002; Ife, 1997) which is an important social work model in this writer's native country of Canada.

This writer began his social work career working in programs that practiced structural social work (Moreau, 1990; Mullaly, 1997), a model of social work that integrates the analysis of power into the ecological model of social work; however, I found little guidance about how to use the structural model in casework practice. Further reading and coursework into postmodern writers such as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida suggested to me directions and ways to make the power relations within social arrangements visible for clients and the social work profession; however, nothing appeared to provide an overriding theory that could be applied to social work practice. In fact, most contemporary postmodern theorists argued against any project of theory development, preferring a looser understanding of how knowledge develops on a local level and according to powerful forces.

One difficulty that arises from postmodern relativistic thinking is its challenge to the absolutes of ethical codes, such as those of the social work profession. In particular, the structural social work idea of increasing the power of marginalized communities, often called "empowerment," raises concerns about the social work profession's inadvertently encouraging individuals and communities to take power in ways that

diminish the power of others, as in the unwarranted use of violence (Fook, 1993, 2002; Ife, 1997).

An article, *Concept, Act and Interest in Social Work Practice*, by Mary-Ellen Kondrat (1995) proposed that the German philosopher Jurgen Habermas had solved this problem of relativism through what Kondrat termed “mutual emancipation.” Kondrat described a model of social functioning that requires social actors to recognize and integrate the knowledge and interests of others in making ethical determinations. Responding to an early work of Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Habermas, 1971), Kondrat laid out a theoretical model by which human beings act through a set of rational interests. Kondrat’s article led me into reading Habermas’s work in depth. In his “Reflections on Communicative Pathology,” originally published in 1974 (Habermas, 2001b), Habermas analyzes the ways family dynamics, communication in particular, affect the personality of the child. This article and Habermas’s subsequent theory of communicative action comprise the foundation of the present study.

Despite Habermas’s primarily socio-political focus, individual, group, and family dynamics are at the core of his project, in that he suggests a just society is only possible in circumstances where individuals are able to consider the position of “the other” and to maintain communication in the face of conflict – skills learned and promoted in families and communities. For Habermas, the ability to communicate in the face of conflict is the apotheosis of social skills.

Habermas bases his theory of communicative action on the idea that genuine communication involves a mutual exchange, a process of sharing that is distinguished from speech and action designed to produce a specific action. In Habermas’s theory, this

writer saw a theory that could explain how children develop a set of social competencies to create the conditions for socially just communication. Habermas, despite his critics' assertions to the contrary (Allen, 2007), also appeared to offer a way to understand how power gets translated into personal and communal pathologies. Habermas, in his two volume elaboration of the theory of communicative action, provides a schema of social action that, to this writer, provided a comprehensive guideline for intervening with bullying and other forms of interpersonal oppression which had been part of my social work experiences.

This project will test the applicability of Habermas's theory to explain the mechanisms of effects of bullying on children's functioning and development.

The Problem in Agency and Social Work Contexts

Research into school bullying has been conducted primarily by social psychologists and educators; however, scientific inquiry into the topic is currently in decline, as evidenced by a precipitous drop in scholarly publications on the subject to a low of 136 peer-reviewed studies in 2005 (Stassen Berger, 2007). Despite a lack of consistent scientific data, educators and social workers are constrained to act, sometimes in the face of legislation, to end bullying (Limber & Small, 2003), with few scientific tools to guide practice (Stassen Berger, 2007). Bullying is virtually invisible within the sociology discipline and has only recently become a focus of research in the social work profession (Mishna, 2003).

School bullying comes to the attention of social workers in various practice settings. School social workers come into direct contact with bullying within the host setting of schools and non-school social workers encounter the phenomenon in child and

family treatment settings. Yet Mishna (2003, 2007) acknowledges that bullying has received little attention within the social work profession until very recently. In recent times, fewer social workers have been employed by school districts, and those that are employed may be providing services to more than one school (NASW, 2011). This paucity of resources limits the ability of many school social workers to spend time and resources on bullying interventions. School violence, on the other hand, has been a significant issue for school social work, with overt acts of violence that invoke disciplinary and juvenile justice intervention absorbing a great deal of school social workers' limited resources (Allen-Meares, Washington, & Welsh, 2000).

Bullying prevention has not been part of school social work's mandate because the problem has not been universally accepted as consistent with the traditional mandate of school social work to intervene only when an issue directly affects academic functioning (Miller, Martin, & Schamess, 2003). Evidence is emerging, however, that bullying does in fact depress academic functioning both for individual children as well as classroom groups (S. W. Twemlow, 2004; Wentzel & Asher., 1995; Woods & Wolke, 2004); therefore, intervening in bullying should fall within the traditional school social work mandate (Astor, 1998; Mishna, 2003).

A strong case, based on the academic and personal effects of bullying, can be made for an expanded mandate for clinical professions to provide direct services to children and their families within schools affected by bullying, including prevention and primary treatment (Adelman & Taylor, 1998; Frey et al., 2005; SAMSHA, 2003). Such a mandate, however, will require funding for social workers and faculty time for teachers

to implement anti-bullying and social skills building interventions into every day curriculum.

Mishna (2003) asserts that social workers are in the best position to provide counseling services to children, and consultation and training for school personnel to deal specifically with school bullying. The social work profession is already established within the host setting of the schools, and it has a set of conceptual skills with which to analyze multiple social contexts as well as a set of practical skills with which to intervene to improve the school environment.

Bullying, as a set of oppressive experiences, can be seen as an issue of social justice. Intervening against bullying is consistent with the mandate of Critical Social Work. Critical social work (Fook, 1993; Healy; Ife, 1997), a dominant paradigm in Canada, shares with critical theory an emancipatory mandate that requires taking direct action against oppressive forces and ameliorating the effects of that oppression. Scandinavian anti-bullying initiatives are based on an explicit project of social justice in that reducing bullying is seen as a way to reduce marginalization among adult citizens (Roland, 2000).

Alternative Views of Bullying and Victimization

For some children, the experience of bullying may not be harmful. Most research into bullying is predicated on the assumption that bullying is a malignant phenomenon; however, there is some evidence that some children who make the transition away from the victim role, called “escaped victims,” find that the bullying experience actually strengthened their character (Dixon, Smith, & Jenks, 2004; P. K. Smith, Talamelli, Cowie, Naylor, & Chauhan, 2004). Bullying experiences during childhood may also lead

to the social reproduction of adult roles of submissiveness and domination (Dixon et al., 2004; A. Sutton, Smith, & Swettenham, 1999), which may be considered as positive or negative depending on one's standpoint on roles of social control. One study (S. Brown & Taylor, 2008) shows that adults who were victimized as children tend to be employed in subservient roles more frequently than those who bullied or those who were neither bullies nor victims.

Percy-Smith (2001) points out that systematic abuse of power is endemic to capitalist societies which require people to take roles with varying degrees of coercion:

In contemporary social constructions, bullying is increasingly seen as a problem. Yet a paradox exists in that, for example, the systematic abuse of power has throughout history characterized many processes of social interaction, for instance in the workplace by bosses, teachers in schools or by parents in the home, and continues to do so in some cases (Percy-Smith & Matthews, 2001, p. 51).

Kogan and Chandan (2004) in their qualitative research into school violence found a small number of teachers and parents who expressed opinions in favor of bullying. Most of this group felt that bullying was an important part of childhood and helped the children become tougher and more prepared for an adult world. One father threatened to hit his child himself if he did not learn to stand up to his tormentor.

No research studies have yet been published that examine the relationship between childhood bullying and adult violence and aggression³; however, German educators during the Nazi era promoted bullying, without using that specific term, as a way of preparing children to take on adult roles of oppression such as concentration and death camp workers. Kamenetsky (1996) in her analysis of Nazi children's literature shows how bullying was promoted and taught as a way to reproduce adult roles of domination and even cruelty.

³ There has been a longitudinal study that has followed Norwegian children into young adulthood.

Bullying among adults in the workplace is another emerging topic of research (Cowie, Naylor, Rivers, Smith, & Pereira, 2002; Hoel, Rayner, & Cooper, 1999; P. K. Smith, 1997). However, it is not yet clear that workplace and school bullying are related. Longitudinal studies begun in Scandinavia in the 1980s and 1990s are just beginning to measure adult roles to determine whether children who were bullies or victims continue their roles into adulthood: the longitudinal research cohort is just entering the labor market so some answers to that question may be imminent.

Bullying and Social Competence

Social competent figures in several studies in this systematic review and is also a fundamental concept in Habermas's theory of communicative action. Social competence is a diffuse concept that comprises a wide range of behaviors. Segrin (2000), in an attempt to capture the common feature of all social skills, defines social competence as the ability to interact in a way that is appropriate and effective. Within the empirical literature, social competence – or social skills--is measured in several ways including the child's number of reciprocated friendships, subjective measures of the quality of the child's interaction, the ability to negotiate, sense of humor, perceived attachment, among others.

Definitions and Methodology in Bullying Research

Despite the fact that bullying has been the subject of research for 30 years, bullying researchers have not yet coordinated definitions or methodology. To date, there have been no attempts to develop conventions that would coordinate definitions and

methods to allow studies to build logically one on the other. This lack of coordinated activity leads to a very confusing picture of bullying and its effects.

With governments and states implementing policy and laws against bullying (Limber & Small, 2003), intervention programs are proliferating (Limper, 2000; McGrath, 2007; Scaglione & Scaglione, 2006); however, there is scant evidence for the effectiveness of these programs (Rigby, 2002a, 2003; J. D. Smith, Schneider, Smith, & Ananiadou, 2004; P. K. Smith, Pepler, & Rigby, 2004; Stevens, De Bourdeaudhuij, & Van Oost, 2000). Three meta-analytic studies concluded that there is no evidence to show that any bullying intervention program has been effective and there is even some evidence that certain interventions may actually increase bullying (D.J. Pepler, Craig, Ziegler, & Charach, 1994; Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). By contrast, there is evidence that violence, as disaggregated from bullying, can be both prevented and reduced (Mytton, DiGuseppi, Gough, Taylor, & Logan, 2006). This leads to the conclusion that bullying is an intransigent may be a more damaging subset of aggression.

Dubin (1978) suggests that interventions in the applied sciences are unlikely to succeed when there is no adequate theoretical explanation for the underlying phenomenon. This appears to be the case with bullying. Many bullying intervention programs are created with little or no reference to any supporting scientific literature (Stassen Berger, 2007).

Abuse of power is the defining element of bullying interaction, yet none of the theoretical models currently used in the bullying literature explicitly consider the dynamics and effects of power. Power abuse is the single variable that distinguishes bullying from other forms of aggression. Imbalance of power needs to be a significant

feature of a theory that explains the bullying phenomenon and forms the basis of effective intervention to improve outcomes for children involved in bullying. This project is an attempt to mine the existing empirical literature to begin the process of building such a theory.

PART I STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

This study will examine whether and to what degree Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action (Habermas, 1984, 1987) can be used to understand the mechanisms of effect of school bullying. The project will build a theory using data drawn from a systematic review of literature on the effects and correlates of bullying.

Abuse of power is accepted by contemporary bullying researchers as the core element and defining feature of bullying (Farrington, 1993; P. K. Smith & Sharp, 1994), yet the processes by which this abuse of power affects children have not been explored (Finkelhor, 1995; Morrison; Rigby, 2002b, 2003) . While Habermas's theory of communicative action does not use the discrete term "power," it does explore how action is coordinated through differing means, including direct and indirect coercion and strategic manipulation. It is this writer's contention that Habermas's theory provides a conceptual framework with which to understand the complexities power and influence through the lens of action coordination.

The theory of communicative action is the result of Habermas's project of "universal pragmatics" (Habermas, 2000) which specifies a set of logically irreducible social competencies and social conditions that make knowledge and social action possible (Habermas, 2001c; Heath, 2001). Universal pragmatics attempts to understand and explain the social world with direct reference to social processes without the need for metaphor (McCarthy, 1984). Biological metaphors, such as ecological theory that compares the human environment with biological ecology, break down when applied to human communities; for example, the boundaries in human communities cannot be as

easily demarcated as the ecosystems of separate plant and animal species (McCarthy, 1984).

Habermas's project also has a goal of building a just democratic constitutional state. It might appear that the issue of school bullying, with its local, individual, community level focus is remote from Habermas's expansive goal; however, Habermas shows that the basic competencies for building a just state are acquired in childhood. Scandinavian anti-bullying projects are often predicated on claims that reducing bullying will decrease the problem of marginalization among adult citizens (Roland, 2000). Habermas himself applies his ideas to family dynamics analyzing communicative pathology from a family systems perspective (Habermas, 2001b). In Habermas's vision of ideal speech conditions, he views the skills of meaning-making and consensus building as essential components of ethical action in a just state.

Two sets of distinctions are central to Habermas's theory. He separates social action into "instrumental" and "communicative" action; and he separates the "lifeworld," the part of the social world in which meaning and conventions are formed through consensus and discussion, from the "systems" such as economic and administrative institutions that are invented to solve problems of distribution in complex societies. How these two sets of distinctions will form the basis for understanding the effects of bullying in this project and will be more fully elaborated on below.

According to Habermas, communicative action is the source of myriad acts of meaning making and solidarity; by nature it is a highly autonomous sphere of action. Instrumental action, on the other hand, is an effective tool to meet specific ends and is, by nature, low in autonomy. To Habermas, systems and instrumental actions are neutral

concepts signifying the necessary steering mechanisms required to organize the lifeworld; however, instrumental action misapplied can cause an array of social ills (Habermas, 1987). These abstruse concepts will be more fully explored in the theory chapter of the actual systematic review.

Habermas's typology of instrumental action corresponds exactly to the typology of bullying actions that have emerged from a large body of studies that explicate and delineate the bullying phenomenon. Free social play among children, in contrast to instrumental action, shares with communicative action the defining feature of an absence of instrumental motivations (Lever, 1978). These concepts will be briefly described in the following sub-section.

The Major Concepts

Bullying is distinct from the larger set of behaviors that constitute "peer aggression." The latter term is used to connote the full range of aggressive and coercive actions among children that may or may not include bullying (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002). In the theoretical and empirical research, the terms "bullying" and "peer victimization" are used interchangeably. "Peer harassment" is a sub-type of bullying and denotes the verbal forms of bullying. For this paper, the term "bullying" will be used to denote a range of phenomena characterized by the abuse of power, including forms of peer harassment.

Table 1: Definitions of Terms

Term	Definition
Aggression	hostile or violent behavior
ambient violence	hostile or aggressive behavior that is calibrated to remain below the threshold of adult intervention
Bully	a child who performs coercive or malicious acts against (or infringes upon the autonomy of) a child with lesser power
bully involved	refers to children involved actively in bullying, including victims and bullies
bully-victim	a child who is bullied and also bullies other children
communicative action	speech acts intended to build meaning and solidarity (in its pure form, it is devoid of ulterior motives)
indirect victimization	bullying acts enacted by other people in ways that hide the identity of the bully
instrumental action	Speech acts intended to elicit specific actions in the social world
Interaction	a behavioral, affective, and cognitive event that occurs between individuals
peer acceptance/rejection	the degree to which a child is accepted or not into social relationships and peer activities
peer aggression	a set of aggressive and violent behaviors that includes aggression among and between power equals
power (similar to instrumental action)	social action oriented toward achieving a goal
power bases	the attributes that comprise the disparities in power
relational aggression	attempts to strategically damage the social relationships of another person
Relationship	a succession of interactions between individuals known to each other –mutually recognizing (Hinde, 1976)
rough and tumble play	children’s play behavior that mimics aggressive and bullying activities (Table 1 continues on next page)

social competence	the ability to interact in a way that is appropriate and effective (Segrin, 2000)
social withdrawal	a child's avoidance of social contact
speech acts	vocal and physical actions intended to convey meaning, build meaning, and instigate action in the social world. It is inclusive of communicative and instrumental action.
Teasing	provocation directed at some act or attribute of the recipient (Keltner, Capps, Kring, Young, & Heerey, 2001, p. 235)
victim or target child	a child who is the recipient of bullying acts despite a desire or attempts to stop these acts

Bullying is defined as aggressive or malicious acts performed by a person with greater power against a person with lesser power (Farrington, 1993), or, as more generally as the systematic abuse of power (P. K. Smith & Sharp, 1994). The aggressive acts of bullying repeat or endure over time despite the victim's attempt or desire to stop the abuse.

Bullying is distinguished from rough and tumble play (P. K. Smith & Boulton, 1990) and playful teasing, both of which have features that resemble bullying in content but do not cause harm and are accompanied by clear signals of support, such as warm touch or facial expression (Keltner et al., 2001). Teasing is understood as intentional communication that calls attention to an attribute of the recipient (Keltner et al., 2001). Both rough and tumble play and teasing can move into direct aggression should the target child misunderstand the intent of the play or should the play or teasing become too rough and hurtful. Rough play, then, can turn into aggression or may be understood as aggressive by one of the children.

Bullying involves the deliberate selection of a target with fewer resources of self-defense. Bullying is different from "aggression," hostile or violent behavior which can

arise reciprocally out of a disagreement or mutual antipathy *among equals*. Power disparities, or “power bases,” occur when the bully is superior in “physical size, strength, number,” or “social status.” This writer has also observed, in the context of school work practice, physically small children using power bases not covered in the bullying literature. These smaller children may bully stronger or higher-status children through audacity, their willingness to break social rules, or ferocity, their willingness to take physical risks by being physically or verbally cruel. In one instance, a very small child in a younger grade terrorized children three grades above him and over one foot taller in stature by his ferocity (Kogan & Chandan, unpublished data).

Bullying children may also use their own powers of observation to find ways to gain a power advantage. Craig & Pepler (2007) point out that knowledge of a victim child’s particular vulnerability is a power base when it is exploited deliberately to cause distress.

The description of instrumental power provided by Jurgen Habermas, although he does not use that term, is action taken within the social world to achieve a goal. The Habermasian concept of power will be elaborated on more fully in the conceptual framework section as will the implicitly rational nature of Habermas’s social theory.

Current Theories in Bullying Research

Several prominent researchers (Finkelhor, 1995, 2007a; Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005a; Ladd & Troop Gordon, 2005; Morrison, 2006; Rigby, 2003) attest that there has been very little theory development into the nature of bullying, or into the particular mechanisms of effect that operate on the children involved in various bullying roles. The theories that have been most commonly used to explain the phenomenon are *social learning theory*, *social information processing theory*, and *ecological theory*. A fourth and incipient theory, *developmental victimology* (Finkelhor, 1995, 2007a; Finkelhor et al., 2005a) offers a tentative initial model for explaining the mechanisms of effect on children of all power abuses, including bullying by peers and abuse at the hands of adults. A small number of new or more obscure theories have also been associated with bullying research; these and the theory of communicative action are briefly reviewed here.

Social learning theory proposes that children are aggressive for the rewards that accrue to them or are aggressive due to aggressive behavior learned in their families (Bandura, 1979). Bullies may act out to assure their own safety, attain and maintain status in their peer group (Hazler, Hoover, & Oliver, 1992); this theory tends not to be applied to victims and the ill effects of bullying, although it can be assumed that some children may be victimized due to a lack of social skills.

Social information processing theory (Crain, Finch, & Foster, 2005; Crick & Dodge, 1994; Dodge, 2004; Dodge & Frame, 1982; Gifford-Smith & Rabiner, 2004) is similar to social learning theory and suggests an internal, cognitive misrepresentation of the social world. Children may bully because they misunderstand the cues available in the

social environment; this inaccurate cognitive representation of the social world causes them to attribute negative motivation to neutral or benign social actions which in turn leads to aggressive and violent acts (Dodge & Frame, 1982; Peets, Hodges, Kikas, & Salmivalli, 2007; Salmivalli & Helteenvuori, 2007).

Ecological theory is espoused by a number of American bullying researchers (Blackburn, Dulmus, Theriot, & Sowers, 2004; D.L. Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2001; Swearer & Espelage, 2004). To study bullying in its social context, Rodkin and Hodges (2003) use the term “peer ecology” for the various situations in which children interact. A child’s particular friendship group may intersect with several contexts as children form relationships with others encountered in different school and community contexts, such as in the school classroom or in religious groups. The classroom itself is a peer group which may include nested peer groups in the form of cliques or informal friendship networks. While ecological theory helps understand the social contexts of bullying it does not offer an explanation of bullying *per se*.

Table 2 lists the major and minor theories that have been applied to bullying.

Table 2: Explicit and Embedded Theory

Theory	Application to the Topic of Bullying
Cognitive Dissonance	Bullying occurs due to distorted social cognition
Developmental Victimology	Bullying affects both the present and future functioning
Ecological Perspective	Bullying occurs in a complex peer social environment
Social Development	Bullying adversely affects development of social skills
Social Learning	Bullying occurs due to lack of accurate social knowledge and damages social knowledge
Social Information Processing	Bullying damages the way we understand social processes
Traumatology	Bullying causes symptoms of traumatic stress
Theory of Communicative Action	Bullying prevents social support and solidarity

Noguera (1995), using Foucault's techniques of analyzing institutions (Foucault, 1977a) to explain the educational system, explores the structure of power inherent in the organization of mass education. He argues that the present United States school system emerged from an organizational model similar to that of prisons and mental asylums: institutions that enforce rules, regimentation, punctuality, and order. His central thesis is that vestiges of the social control element of these institutions remain extant in the structure and culture of most schools today despite the efforts of well-meaning principals and teachers who want to interact humanely with children. Noguera suggests that the system of surveillance and control inherent in most US schools are in themselves oppressive and contribute to the climate of violence which it is intended to quell.

There have been no major attempts to explain the reasons and mechanisms through which children are affected by bullying. The theories and ideas discussed thus far in this section explain the etiology of the bullying phenomenon and allow us to put

bullying into the context of the social environment, yet none of the theories suggest a mechanism by which bullying affects children.

Finkelhor (1995), noting that the lack of theory explaining the effects of power abuses, including bullying, suggests that there may be elements that affect children common to all forms of abuse. Finkelhor (1995) constructed a model which he calls “developmental victimology” that proposes two axes of influence: effects that take place in the present environment and those that affect the future. He explains that a child who is abused may experience stress contemporaneously, and that this present stress may impede the child’s ability to negotiate developmental stages which then affects her future adjustment. While Finkelhor thus outlined the idea of developmental victimology, he has not pursued it in his subsequent research.

Theories concerned with the mechanisms of traumatic stress (Vanercolk, 1994) posit that trauma arises from the strong emotions that pertain to experiences of powerlessness resulting in a set of physical and psychological symptoms that can endure. One of the hallmarks of traumatic stress is its potential to evoke an instantaneous and monumental shift in the traumatized person’s understanding of the world. In that way, trauma theory fits with other cognitive theories but it also shows how the body is affected by such symptoms as sleep disturbance and anxiety.

In a single study, Mynard and Joseph (2000) demonstrate that specific mechanisms are at play when different forms of power imbalance occur in bullying. The authors show that relational bullying, where the bully’s identity is unknown (strategic indirect bullying), is associated with higher levels of post-traumatic stress, while physical bullying is associated with lower self-worth. Mynard and Joseph’s work appears to

indicate that there are discrete mechanisms of effect at play in bullying experiences depending on the nature of the bullying. In the years since Mynard and Joseph published their study, however, no studies have either replicated or built on this discovery. This lack of follow up illustrates Stassen-Berger's (2007) assertion that bullying scholarship is in decline.

This writer's exhaustive archival search in the fields of social work, education, urban studies, psychology, sociology, and social psychology has yielded no theoretical literature dealing with the question of the power differential specific to bullying⁴. As has been said, the theories to date used to explain bullying largely concern cognitive processes (Crick & Dodge, 1994) and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977, 1979; Craig, 1998; O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999), but do not attempt to explain the salience of the power differential components of bullying.

Catalano and colleagues (2004) describe a promising theory of social development which is more expansive than most of the theories discussed above. Like the theory of communicative action it suggests that bonding to a socialization unit, such as a school, as predictive of future outcomes. The product of a 20-year longitudinal study, this theory finds that positive bonding to a school is the most powerful resiliency factor in determining positive outcomes for students later in life. It proposes a four-part model of socialization that includes the development of social competencies, the perceived and actual opportunities for interactions with others, and the rewards that accrue from interactions. Social Development Theory has, to date, been applied only to the prevention and treatment of delinquency but it may be able to explain some of the effects of

⁴ The field of geography has also neglected the study of bullying, but a small number of geographers have begun setting a research agenda for the topic (Andrews & Chen, 2006)

bullying, and, in fact, uses similar concepts to the Habermasian theory being used in this project. Both bonding and social competencies are key Habermasian ideas which will be applied to the problems associated with bullying in this project. Habermas's idea, as will be explored in the next section is able to explain both the etiology of bullying as well as its effects.

Theory: The theoretical frame that will be used to explain the findings

As stated above, German philosopher Jurgen Habermas is situated in the school of thought called critical theory. Critical theory is strongly identified with the Institute for Social Research which was founded in Frankfurt, Germany, in the 1920s, and is also called the Frankfurt School, as are the group of thinkers directly or indirectly associated with the Institute (R. H. Brown & Goodman, 2001). The term “critical” derives from Karl Marx’s critique of the political economy in his *Das Kapital* (Marx & Engel, 1955). Within critical theory, the word “critical” refers to the study of the mechanisms or laws through which modern society was formed, with an emphasis on ameliorating the deleterious effects of capitalism on the social world (Marx & Engel, 1955).

The central objective that critical theory advances is human emancipation through a reordering of the social sciences into a unified project that makes “sense of concretely experienced problems and aspirations and (reveals) possibilities of future development” (Habermas, 1984, pp. 537-538). This goal of emancipation arose likely as the result of the oppression and injustices that occurred through Nazi genocide and oppression in their native Germany.

Jurgen Habermas considers himself a product of both Nazi-era and postwar Germany. He openly discusses his membership in the Hitler Youth and the fact that he briefly served as a child soldier in the German army posted on the Western defenses at the end of the World War II (Habermas, 1992). Habermas dates his political awakening to the immediate postwar period when he listened to the Nuremberg trials and saw televised images of the Nazi concentration camps. His project can be summarized as an attempt to determine the conditions upon which a democratic and constitutional state can

be built that will protect the rights of minorities. The evolution of Habermas's theory will be outlined in the next section, including the method he used to develop his theory.

The theory of communicative action has never before been applied to the problem of bullying or, in fact, social casework practice. Habermas himself applied it to family dynamics in an early paper but generally applies the theory to the formation of just and democratic constitutional states. This project will use his theory to derive concepts appropriate to the understanding of the consequence of victimization and to build a theory that explains how abuse of power can damage children both in their contemporaneous functioning and in their development.

Summary of Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action

Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action offers a conceptual framework that can deepen the understanding of how social forces affect the individual (Borradori, 2003; Habermas, 1984, 1987; Honneth, 1992). Habermas proposes a set of mechanisms through which action in the social world can be coordinated. In the following section the system that he used to derive these concepts – universal pragmatics – will be outlined.

Universal Pragmatics

The conceptual research technique at the core of Habermas's theoretical project is a process he calls "universal pragmatics," or the search for the specific set of logically irreducible competencies and conditions that make knowledge and social action possible and allow people to reach understanding in ways that are least distorted (Habermas, 1984, 1987, 2001a; Heath, 2001). Habermas sees consensual communication present in the

social fabric in everyday acts of solidarity, friendship, and family life. As ordinary people engage in daily conversation about life and the world, provide mutual support, and negotiate common activities, they contribute to the development of conventions of shared meaning. This often happens through a consensual process that functions reflexively within the social world. According to Habermas, efforts to reach consensus are the ideal form of communication and necessarily require the recognition of different points of view (Habermas, 1984).

Habermas bases his analysis of social pathology on the ways that communication diverges from the ideal of consensus (Habermas, 1987; Honneth, 1992). He proposes an ideal set of interests at the core of social cognition and an ideal situation for consensual communication (1987). For example, Habermas's ideal speech situation is one in which all speakers are recognized and have equal opportunity to express themselves. However, Habermas uses the ideal condition as a heuristic, a device to assist in conceptualization; it should not be deduced from this discussion that he believes the ideal condition is easily or routinely attained in human interaction.

Speech/Acts

Habermas uses the term "speech/acts" in place of "communication" to denote the utterances, written language, and actions intended to convey meaning and induce or coordinate action, since, within his schema, not all speech/acts qualify as genuine communication, i.e., consensual communication. Speech/acts are divided into two categories: "instrumental" action and "communicative" action; the former includes speech/acts intended to achieve a goal, while the latter includes the speech/acts intended to achieve shared meaning or consensus – true communication, which is reciprocal.

The idea of communicative action as speech/acts operating consensually represents a paradigm shift similar to the introduction of the strengths perspective in social work (Antonovsky, 1996; Saleebey, 1996). The strengths perspective challenges social workers to privilege the strengths and resources of the individuals and communities with which they work and marshal those resources to solve social problems. Habermas suggests that the solutions to the ill effects of oppressive power involve creating the conditions for consensus and solidarity, and applying them to the political and social world (Habermas, 1987).

The Lifeworld and Consensual Process

The theory of communicative action proposes that the consensual intersubjective processes at play in everyday life constitute, in themselves, the world of human beings: he calls this the “lifeworld.” Ritzer and Smart (2001), in interpreting the theory of communicative action, define the “lifeworld” as “those interpretive patterns that are culturally transmitted and linguistically organized, which...include the formation of group identities and the development of individual personality”(p.208). The lifeworld includes the material, emotional and intellectual processes that comprise living organisms and communities.

Habermas’s theory of communicative action is a social theory that elucidates the fundamental internal behavioral controls and the communicative and interactional competencies, or social skills, through which an individual negotiates the lifeworld. The concept of lifeworld may be better understood in light of the French language translation as “monde vecu”, or the “world as it is lived” (Ferry, 1991), and in which the world of meaning and language is formed in a process of intersubjective communication

(Crossley, 1996). Ferry suggests that identity is formed in our daily interactions within the lifeworld including in schools, and not exclusively in our intimate relationships.

Habermas makes a distinction between the lifeworld and the systems that are created to organize activities in the lifeworld. Systems are created to fulfill a function such as provide food or exchange. Habermas asserts that problems occur when the constraints of a system supersede the needs the lifeworld. Nazism is an extreme example of what can occur when a system uncouples from the lifeworld that created it. The concept of system will be more fully elaborated below.

The theory of communicative action has the potential to provide a theoretical framework for the strengths perspective in social work. Communicative action is thought to contain myriad acts of support and repair. In this project, some of the mechanisms of effect by which children have been harmed by bullying involve their alienation from sources of support: this alienation will be more fully discussed in the systematic review below.

There is some research that shows how mechanisms of support and solidarity work in the real world, lifeworld. Granovetter (1973), though not citing Habermas or critical theory, supports the notion of the importance of informal relations. He suggests that there is significant value in weak ties in the forms of acquaintanceship and informal networks of relationship had been underestimated in social theory which favored deeper intimate relationships. Stack (1975), in an ethnographic study of a low-income community found that families supported each other in small but significant ways that concretely improved the lives of individuals in that community. Kogan and Chandan

(2004) also found patterns of support that improved the lives of families in a lower-income community and among children to support the victims of violence and bullying.

From Habermas's theoretical perspective even Granovetter may have underestimated the importance of these weak ties. Within the theory of communicative action the informal networks, weak ties, are the interstices through which all human relations are formed. It is through the medium of acquaintance and social contacts that deeper bonds are able to be formed outside of the family.

Forming and maintaining weak ties, however, requires a considerable set of social competencies. Several skills allow easy maintenance of weak ties including such qualities as a sense of humor, respect for others' time, the ability to exchange valuable or entertaining information, sharing of resources, exchange of labor and ideas, reciprocity, calibration of demand, compliment giving, negotiation, flexibility, and the authentic presentation of self. The person with good social skill, regardless of such life conditions as intelligence, socio-economic level, and academic achievement, is likely to form and maintain better marriages and friendships. These skills may be acquired in family and school contexts and are practiced in children's play situations.

As Hinde (1976) points out, a relationship is predicated on mutual knowledge and recognition: without these, it is simply an interaction. Habermas does not privilege one form of social action over another, stating that instrumental and systemic solutions are necessary to organize an efficient society in which food and resources are distributed; however, Habermas posits that instrumental action leads to less deeply-held foundations of action than does communicative action. To explain this, he proposes the concept of the "binding force."

Binding Force

Bindungsenergien, or Habermas's idea of the binding force (Habermas, 1987) is the route through which much knowledge gets turned into action. To Habermas, the force that comes from instrumental action, often coercion or reward, is weaker than the binding force that comes from communicative action. Where instrumental action operates through interest (incentive and disincentive), communicative action operates through a set of social and cognitive mechanisms that result in compacts, conventions, and commitments for future action. Habermas suggests that this mechanism is based on an internal cognitive process. He sees no discontinuity between his theory of social action and the psychodynamic theories that explain internal processes (Habermas, 1987). He theorizes that the binding force of communicative action is powerful precisely because it is developed consensually in innumerable acts of love and solidarity. This idea contradicts the idea of behaviorism (Skinner, 1969) and developmental biology that proposes that *all* action and learning is based on the reward accrued (Bus, 1987).

The essential nature of the cognitive structure underlying commitment and convention is stability. This stability is responsible for the tenacity of the binding force to evoke social action. Actions based on commitment or conventions are more likely to endure over time and be generalized across different situations.

Instrumentalization and Distortion

Lifeworld and system, and communicative and instrumental action are discrete components in Habermas's theory, yet he allows that in real life the divisions are not always so crystalline: people can abuse the trust of others by giving the false appearance of consensual process. Habermas uses the term "instrumentalization" to refer to the

manipulation of speech/acts to achieve one's own interests. While acknowledging the existence of manipulation and lies, he makes the point that dishonesty can succeed only when there is enough honesty in human interaction to provide a reasonable expectation that the person is being honest (Habermas, 1984). Likewise, some forms of bullying may mimic consensual action, and there is some evidence that this deceptive form of bullying is more destructive than bullying that is being done overtly (Mynard, Joseph, et al., 2000).

Distortion occurs when people are manipulated into taking action that is not in their own interest and is not generated through consensual process. An example of this is the domination of the US food industry which has largely replaced healthy nutritional practices with processed foods through a campaign of advertisement and lobbying.

Repetition is a source of distortion within the nature of bullying. This causes distortions in both the bully and the victim themselves and may create a distortion in the peer culture of the school when bullying becomes an accepted function within the school culture as a child's thoughts, emotions and identity become shaped by repeated and enduring experiences. Bullying within the peer ecology can become a significant source of entertainment to a large number of children (Cheyne, 1998; Salmivalli, 1999), which also may cause distortion in the peer culture.

Comparison of Bullying to the Theory of Communicative Action

In this project the various components of the theorized model of effects will be brought together into a comprehensive model. The constructs and effects sizes and any salient correlate such as developmental stage or demographic feature will be compared to the predicted model of effect based on Habermas's theory of communicative action.

Particular attention will be paid to any data that appear to disconfirm Habermas's theory or that point to a mechanism of effect not immediately anticipated in Habermas's theory.

Habermas's concepts will be explored in this section including the idea of the binding force, cumulative continuity, and the dynamics of respect to see if they can shed light on the process that occurs when some children are affected by bullying and other children are protected from its ill effects.

Table 3 contains a number of predictions based on the review of the literature and the ideas of communicative action.

Table 3: Suggested Mechanisms of Effects and their Predicted Results

Mechanism of Effect	Predicted Results
ambient stress	lack of enjoyment of school lack of safety at school sleep disturbance concentration disturbance lower academic performance
deprivation of social free play (Pepler)	less (more circumscribed) rehearsal of adult roles less enjoyment of social world less physical activity through play mechanisms of endurance (ie. repetition and reproduction)
identity formation	distortion or lack of identity formation and other sequelae predicted by Honneth
cumulative continuity (Kokko)	social skills and aggression that continue due to the child's choice of friendships and social environment
role preparation	bullying as a preparation for an adult role (perhaps with the implicit or explicit support of adults or older children) as suggested by Brunkhorst.
social skills	for taking different social roles in different contexts deep imprinting of instrumental social skills at the expense of the skills required for consensus building that the children who view the reasons for bullying as attributes will be more damaged than children who view the reasons as variables

While the goal of this project is to test the theory of communicative action, it is possible that the project will result in a modification of that theory, or the building of a new theory derived from communicative action.

PART II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON BULLYING

In this section, the research on bullying will be reviewed and analyzed. Bullying is a complex phenomenon comprised of several dimensions. The subsections below focus on the history of the research, the characteristics of the bullying phenomenon, the characteristics of bullies and victims, intervention strategies, and the effects of bullying.

History of the Research

Research into bullying began in the 1970s with a small number of seminal articles. Since that time researchers have concentrated on determining the actions that constitute bullying (Arora, 1996; Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992; Mynard, Lawrence, & Joseph, 2000); the characteristics of both children who bully and their victims (Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 1999; Coie, Dodge, Terry, & Wright, 1991; Olweus, 1980; Perry, Williard, & Perry, 1990; Schwartz, Dodge, & Coie, 1993); the development of effective intervention and prevention strategies (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; J. D. Smith et al., 2004); and the effects of being bullied (Ambert, 1994; Mynard, Joseph, et al., 2000; Roland, 2000). As has been stated above, no research has been done to determine the latent, unseen, processes and mechanisms at play when bullying affects children (Ladd & Troop Gordon, 2005; Morrison, 2006; Rigby, 2002b; Rivers et al., 2007).

The Actions that Constitute Bullying

A large part of the bullying research attempts to delineate and define the bullying phenomenon itself (Mynard, Lawrence, et al., 2000; Rigby, 2000; P. K. Smith et al., 1999; P. K. Smith & Sharp, 1994). In early research (Olweus, 1978, 1980), the concept of

bullying was not differentiated from peer aggression in general. The variety of gross and subtle behaviors that comprise bullying and the nature of the bullying interaction emerged as researchers and clinicians became more familiar with the phenomenon. Bullying behavior is also evolving and with new communications technology, new types of bullying are emerging (Li, 2006; Mishna, 2007).

Dan Olweus, a Swedish psychologist, in the first large-scale and systematic studies of bullying among boys (1973, 1978), limited his operational definition of bullying to physical aggression and verbal threat without concern for power disparities (Olweus, 1978). Olweus's initial definition has been used as the operational definition in a great many subsequent research projects which has led to the conflation of bullying with other forms of aggression in many studies.⁵ Since the publication of Olweus's early work, several researchers, including Olweus himself, have expanded the definition of bullying to include power disparities and a range of harmful actions taken strategically and indirectly (Arora, 1994; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Crick, Grotpeter, & Bigbee, 2002; Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, & Peltonen, 1988; Lowenstein, 1978).

Arora and Thomson (1987) continued elaborating the phenomenon of bullying by including a wider range of indirect and strategic actions including ganging up on children and being rude about skin color. Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, and Peltonen (1988) furthered the understanding of the actions that constitute bullying by including relational forms of aggression, such as social manipulation and status assaults. Subsequent research continued to elucidate subtle forms of relational aggression (Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1997; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Owens, Slee, & Shute, 2000; Simmons, 2000) and the

⁵ This conflation of bullying and aggression compounds itself throughout the early bullying literature as the definition used in early Olweus studies is repeated uncritically in later research.

use of contemporary technology such as cell phones and the Internet (Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Li, 2006; Mishna, 2007) that bullies can use to coordinate elaborate campaigns to undermine the reputations and social friendships of their victims.

The Internet and texting capacities of cell phones provide a new forum for unsupervised communication among and between children which has led to this new phenomenon called “cyberbullying” (Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Mishna, 2007; Strom & Strom, 2005; Williams & Guerra, 2007). Cyberbullying refers to bullying done through any electronic communication medium. Some of the technology available is new and leads to hitherto unknown forms of bullying. For example, social networking technology allows peers to rate each other using graphic indicators on such variables as popularity and attractiveness. A child who is being subjected to an orchestrated campaign against her social system can now literally watch her own popularity plummet on a bar graph within minutes,

Bullying and Developmental Stages

The quality and nature of bullying is not stable over the developmental stages of childhood (P. K. Smith & Levan, 1995). Ample evidence shows that bullying behavior begins in the early school years, reaches a peak in middle school, and then drops off sharply in later adolescence (Long & Pellegrini, 2003; Nansel et al., 2001; A.D. Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000; Salmivalli & Lagerspetz, 1998; P. K. Smith & Levan, 1995; P. K. Smith, Madsen, & Moody, 1999). Bjorkqvist, Lagespetz, and Kaukiainen (1992), Smith and Levan (1995), and Long and Pellegrini (2003) found that the bullying phenomena increases in quantity and sophistication up to middle school among children ages 14 and 15, and then sharply drops off in later adolescence. Younger bullying

children were found to use more direct physical aggression and threat, gradually increasing their repertoire of actions as they age to include orchestrated social exclusion (Stanley & Arora, 1998), assaults on reputation, and strategic manipulation of other children to carry out bullying activities. The drop off in bullying in late high school may be due to simple proportion: the fact that older teens have a diminishing cohort of older and bigger children in their environment.

Bullying as an Interactional Phenomenon

From the beginning of the research into bullying, the phenomenon was described as an interpersonal dynamic (Heinemann, 1972.; Pikas, 1975; Salmivalli et al., 1996); however, research shows that bullying most often occurs in the context of a group dynamic as opposed to a one-to-one interaction (Bukowski & Adams, 2005; Macklem, 2003; D. J. Pepler & Craig, 1995; Salmivalli et al., 1996). Bullying is increasingly typified as an interactional phenomenon and much of the bullying research being done in the United States (Blackburn et al., 2004; D. L. Espelage, Holt, & Henkel, 2003) interprets bullying from the ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), as a phenomenon that occurs over time as the result of the interplay between and among intrapsychic and environmental variables. While these authors show how bullying behavior affects the school community, they do not suggest an explanation of how environmental factors promote or prevent bullying.

Pepler and Craig (1995), using videotapes of children in play and classroom contexts, reported that in 85% of observed incidents of bullying at least one uninvolved peer was present. Salmivalli and her colleagues (1996) undertook the first systematic study into the ancillary roles children take in bullying situations. In addition to the direct bully and victim roles, these authors found children taking such roles as the “assistant,” a child directly abetting a bully through behaviors such as making suggestions to the bully or holding the victim; the “reinforcer,” a child who comes to watch, laugh, and actively incite the bully; the “defender,” a child who attempts to help the victim by actively attempting to stop the bullying or by comforting the victim after the incident; and the “outsider,” the child who intentionally absents him or herself from the bullying. A later

study by Sutton and Smith (1999) found that younger children tended to be more actively involved in the bullying experience with fewer children taking the outsider role or no role at all.

Cheyne (1998), in a conceptual analysis of bullying, suggests that children who bully may victimize others as a form of mimesis, the deliberate imitation by one group of another group's behavior--in this case, children imitating adult roles in a process similar to theatrical productions, sporting events, or pageants. Like theater, bullying comes with assigned roles and coordinated action. The victim plays the protagonist role, as his or her emotions are the subject of intense interest to the audience.

Characteristics of Bullies and Victims

A large number of studies attempt to identify the factors and characteristics that put children at risk for being involved in bullying either as victim or bully (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004; Baldry, 2004; Bowers, P.K., & Binney, 1994; Ladd & Burgess, 2001; Loeber & Dishion, 1984; Olweus, 1980; Perren & Hornung, 2005; Smetana, 1995). Research into the correlates and characteristics of bullies and their families has been uncoordinated and contains some very significant gaps. For example, researchers have only recently begun to explore the co-occurrence of other forms of victimization in the lives of bullied children (Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2007a, 2007b; Legkauskas & Jakimaviciute, 2007) and the association between victimization at school and family violence (Mohr, 2006).

Personal attributes may put some children at risk for being chosen as targets of bullies (B. J. Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002; Ladd & Troop Gordon, 2003; Perry et al., 1990; Schwartz et al., 1993). Kochenderfer and Ladd have done significant research

into the interplay between such variables as aggression and withdrawal with peer rejection and bullying. Their body of work includes a number of longitudinal studies intended to develop causal models of processes that put children at risk for bullying and aggression. Aggressiveness, reactive aggressiveness, and social withdrawal tendencies are associated with being victimized by bullies (Salmivalli & Helteenvuori, 2007).

Gender, Ethnic, and Linguistic Difference in Bully Involvement

Bullying appears to be evenly distributed across national, linguistic, ethnic, and class boundaries. Both genders bully, although there is a mildly significant difference in the rates at which girls and boys use relational and direct bullying (Lagerspetz et al., 1988).

Reacting to Olweus's original work that excluded girls (Olweus, 1978), Lagerspetz and Bjorkqvist and their colleagues (Lagerspetz, et al., 1988; Bjorkqvist, et al. 1992) included both genders in their samples and expanded the definition of bullying to include relational aggression. The authors found only one minor gender difference – a greater likelihood that boys will engage in direct physical aggression than would girls. Despite attempts by the authors to clarify the purpose of their research and dispel misunderstanding (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992), their studies have been widely misinterpreted to mean that girls and boys bully in categorically different ways (Crothers, Field, & Kolbert, 2005; Owens, Shute, & Slee, 2000; Owens, Slee, et al., 2000). One particular study (Storch et al., 2003) finds no significant differences in the nature and extent of bullying by gender.

The studies that address bullying among different ethnic communities also have contradictory results. Moran, Smith, Thompson and Whitney (1993), in studying children

ages 9 to 15, found no differences in the ethnic affiliation of children who are involved in bullying. Nansel et al. (2001) found a slightly higher level of bullying among Latino and African- American children as compared to the dominant culture. Peskin and colleagues (2007) found slightly higher levels of bullying among African-American children, while Estell, Farmer, and Cairns (2007), in a study of rural African-American youth, found no difference in the rates of bullying when compared to studies of children in dominant communities. DeVoe (2004) found that white children were slightly more likely to be bullied than African-American or Latino children. Spriggs, Iannotti, Nansel & Haynie (2007) surveying 11,033 children ages 11 to 16 found lower rates of bullying among African-Americans as compared to white and Latino students. A systematic review comparing definitions, methods, and results among these seemingly contradictory studies may be helpful in determining why these studies came to differing conclusions.

The variation in rates of bullying among ethnic, rural, and linguistic communities is not as significant as the variation among schools in individual studies (Sharp et al., 2000)⁶. Olweus (1990) found that bullying occurs less frequently in schools that do not tolerate it. The degree of ambient violence--the range of behaviors that constitute bullying -- fluctuates across context and depends, to some degree, on adults' attitudes and responses.

Family Characteristics

Most of the studies into the family characteristics of children involved in bullying focused on the social context of the bully rather than the victim. Bullying behavior is associated with certain negative parenting practices, studied as a variety of variables

⁶ These differences were noted in every multi-schools study reviewed for this paper where data for individual schools were provided and will be a part of the data mining study proposed below.

including emotional distance, punitive or authoritarian practices, family conflict, and family violence (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004; Baldry, 2004; Bowers et al., 1994; Loeber & Dishion, 1984; Smetana, 1995). Olweus (1980) in a study of boys, ages 9 to 11, found a link between mothers' negativity and fathers' power assertive methods and boys' aggression. Again, as with many of the early bullying studies, the definition of bullying used in this study did not distinguish bullying from other forms of aggression.

Olweus, in a later study using his more contemporary definition of bullying (1993), found an association between bullying children and a power-assertive parenting style and a lack of warmth in the parent. In that study, no association was found between bullying and maternal negativity, however. In a similar vein, Bowers, Smith, and Binney (1994) found that bullies perceived their parents as distant, lacking in warmth, and either over-protective or under-involved; they also perceived themselves as lacking in power within their own families (Bowers et al., 1994). Loeber and Dishion (1984), looking at aggressive children in general, reported that the children of parents who used both inconsistent and power-assertive discipline techniques were more likely to be aggressive.

From a positive perspective, studies show that positive outcomes in adolescents, such as low substance abuse (Baumrind, 1991), social and psychological adjustment, and social competence, are associated with such positive parenting practices as warmth, discipline, and adequate levels of supervision (Smetana, 1995; Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts, & Dornbusch, 1994).

Ahmed and Braithwaite (2004) examined a wide variety of family and school variables that could contribute to a child's role as a bully or victim. The authors found that a combination of family and school factors predicted 61% of bullies and 76% of

bully-victims, the children who are both bullies and victims; however, the authors do not attempt to determine whether some of the school factors such as “school liking” and “school hassles” pre-existed or arose as a direct result of the bullying.

Aside from the power differential, victims are not always chosen because of a particular attribute or quality, as many in the public believe. Some children are chosen as targets at random, or because they are thriving socially and academically and are perceived as smart (Evenson, 1999).

There is less evidence of an association between negative parenting practices and a child’s vulnerability to victimization (Haynie et al., 2001); however, since some children are selected as victims at random this dilute the statistical likelihood that family characteristics will be strongly associated with victimization, since many random victims will have strong positive family relationships.

Bullying Behavior and Social Relations

Bullies vary in terms of popularity among other children (L.D. Hanish & Guerra, 2004). Aggressive children in general are not usually popular (Lopez & DuBois, 2005; Mynard, Joseph, et al., 2000; Mynard, Lawrence, et al., 2000; Wentzel & Asher., 1995); however, some bullies are considered popular among their peers (Estell et al., 2007; P. C. Rodkin, Farmer, Pearl, & Van Acker, 2000) and this group appears to have the largest aversive effect (Mynard, Lawrence & Joseph, 2000; Lopez & DuBois, 2005). Estell et al. (2007) found that both bullies and victims tend to be socially marginalized in schools; however, a subset of bullies was also identified, in their study, as popular. The authors argue that deficits of social learning and social skills do not explain the incidence of bullying by otherwise popular children who have well-developed social skills.

School and Community Characteristics

Olweus's extensive research project (1992, 1994) on bullying in a school context indicates that the characteristics of the school environment may determine much of the variance in the prevalence of bullying. Certain characteristics of a school may reduce bullying, including rapid and firm adult response to bullying, positive, non-punitive discipline, and professional supervision of children on the playground, in lunchrooms, and corridors (Olweus, 1992, 1994; Boulton, 1991). This is supported by studies that compare the rates of bullying among schools (Boulton, 1991; Sharp et al., 2000). Sharp and her colleagues (2000) found that the prevalence rate of bullying varied by as much as 17% among five regional schools.

Gumpel and Meadan (2000) show that the prevalence of bullying is sensitive to and possibly even determined by the response of adults within the school community: bullying will increase where adults systematically ignore it. Dixon and colleagues qualitative research about the integration of a class of hearing impaired children into one British school serendipitously uncovered an extensive pattern among teachers of denying and minimizing instances of bullying (Dixon, Smith, & Jenks, 2004). Thus, the attitudes and prejudices of parents and teachers should be the focus of a coordinated research effort into the correlates of bullying.

Noguera (1995) proposes that the structure of the school system replicates an oppressive power structure in that it is organized using the same model as prisons with an emphasis on surveillance and order (Foucault, 1977a). Noguera suggests that this structure undermines the efforts of well-meaning educators who want to interact humanely with children. Twemlow, Fonagy, Sacco & Brethour Jr. (2006) note that some

teachers themselves are using bullying tactics in the classroom and that this reinforces bullying among the children.

Community factors in school bullying have been studied less than family and individual factors (Bowen, Bowen, & Ware, 2002). In the one study that specifically looks at community violence, Schwartz and Proctor (2000) found no correlation between community violence, experienced directly or witnessed, and bullying behavior.

Factors that Put Children at Risk for Victimization

Bullies do “not distribute their aggression evenly across all available peer targets but instead selectively direct their attacks toward a minority of peers who serve consistently in the role of victim” (Perry et al., 1990, p. 1310). There is a popularly held belief that victims of bullying are chosen for this role because of a particular physical or personal quality, such as obesity or wearing eyeglasses (Olweus, 1993), or being gifted. One study (Janssen, Craig, Boyce, & Pickett, 2004) did find, contrary to other research, that overweight teens were somewhat more likely to be chosen as a target. However, Sunde-Peterson and Ray (2006) found that such “outstanding” features were evenly distributed between bullies and victims. In other words, a child with glasses, obesity, or braces is as likely to fill the role of bully as the role of victim, but these children are not as likely to be in the non-bully-involved group of children.

Whereas physical characteristics do not solely appear to predict victimization, certain behavioral and social characteristics put children at higher risk of being bullied. These include passivity (Schwartz et al., 1993) and aggression, particularly reactive aggression (Schwartz, Proctor, & Chien, 2001), and the tendency toward social withdrawal (Ladd & Burgess, 2001).

Victims may signal an inability to defend themselves, by simply having a smaller stature or by a behavioral signal that indicates an unwillingness to defend their own interests (Egan & Perry, 1998). The victim may also reinforce the bully by easily relinquishing resources (Olweus, 1978; Perry et al., 1990) or by exhibiting an emotional reactivity such as crying easily.

Ladd and Kochenderfer-Ladd have conducted a large number of studies into the quality of children's social relations (B. J. Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002; B.J. Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Ladd & Troop Gordon, 2003) and found that social skills were both a cause and a consequence of bullying and that both were associated with a downward spiral of self-esteem among victims. In other words, children who started their school career with poor social skills were found to be at higher risk of bullying, and bullying experience damage social skills even for those children who started school with good social skills. Social skills, then, need to be understood as dynamic and evolving through the developmental stages of childhood.

Low self-esteem also appears to function as both a risk factor for victimization as well as a consequence of victimization (Egan & Perry, 1998, Troop-Gordon & Ladd, 2005) (Egan & Perry, 1998; Ladd & Troop Gordon, 2005). Egan and Perry (1998) found that children who were "protected" by a high self-regard were victimized less than children with low self-regard. The authors also found that the experience of victimization further lowers the child's level of self-regard.

Children who are either withdrawn socially or reactively aggressive are at higher risk for bullying than children with better social skills (L.D. Hanish & Guerra, 2004; B. J. Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002; B.J. Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Ladd &

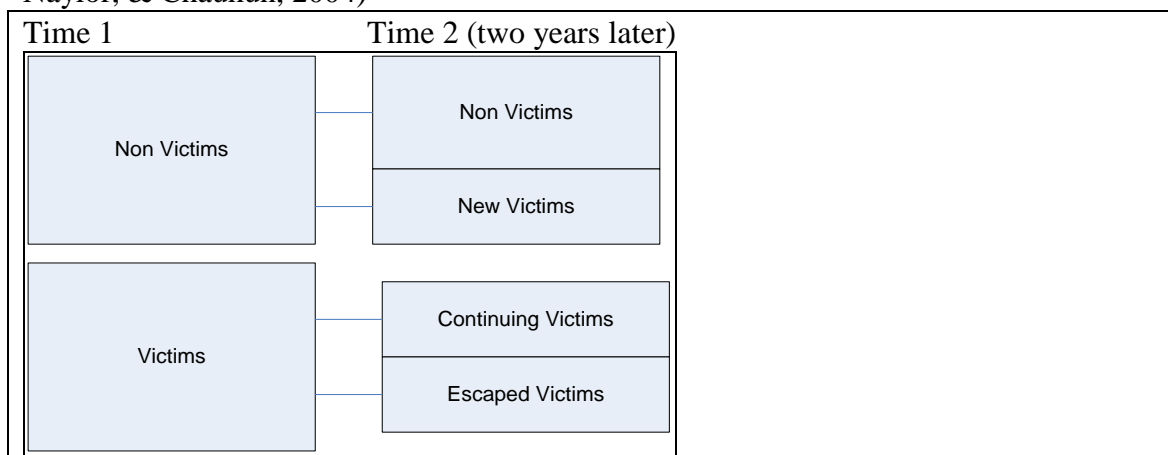
Burgess, 2001; Ladd & Troop Gordon, 2003). The victimized child may lack the social skills that are valued in children's peer relations, such as a sense of humor or familiarity with popular culture (Egan & Perry, 1998).

Swiss researchers Perren and Hornung (2005) provide confirmation that victims tend to have lower levels of peer support than either bullies or non-bully-involved children. Having and keeping friends protects children from victimization (Davies, 1982; Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1997). Friendships may function to decrease the imbalance of power and increase self-esteem (Schmidt & Bagwell, 2007).

Certain minority groups such as gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth in contemporary America tend to suffer more bullying than other groups, but it is not yet clear whether the phenomenon is part of bullying or indicative of a separate social problem of heterosexism or homophobia (Poteat & Espelage, 2007; Warwick, Chase, Aggleton, & Sanders, 2004; Young & Sweeting, 2004) Further research needs to be done to identify children who otherwise have few risk factors and rich resources of resilience and are still targeted by bullies, some of whom may have been chosen at random, .

Entry and Exit from the Victim Role

Figure 1: Role Transitions Over Two Years(adapted from Smith, Talamelli, Cowie, Naylor, & Chauhun, 2004)



Bullying, according to the research, peaks in middle school. Absent in the literature is the simple mathematic formula that determines this large jump in prevalence in middle and especially junior high school: the proportion of children on the lowest end of the age range is one-third in middle school and fully one-half in junior high: this compares with one-sixth of children in a K-5 school. Middle and junior high school children find themselves suddenly on the smaller end of the school after being on the larger end for two years or more.

As was discussed above, the acceleration of growth at middle and junior high school age explains the statistical jump in bullying prevalence in middle school. Children's bodies may increase as much as 35% in bone and muscle mass over a two-year period (Ruff, 2003). In addition to the likelihood of becoming a victim increasing with the proportion, children may experience extreme variation in physical size. In some cases, children who were formerly the smallest in their cohort will grow in size and strength to equal or surpass their peers: conversely, a child who was a bully in elementary school may suddenly find himself in middle school dwarfed in size by his former victim.

As with the peak in middle school, the fall off of victimization in high school may also be the result of simple mathematics: as children reach the end of their high school years, the pool of potential bullies vanishes as the older and larger cohort graduates or leaves high school.

Co-occurring Victimization (Poly-victimization)

Little research has sought to determine whether and to what degree children involved in bullying have experienced other forms of abuse or traumas (Finkelhor, 2007b; Legkauskas & Jakimaviciute, 2007). Legkauskas and Jakimaviciute (2007) found that for both girls and boys the experience of abuse at home was highly correlated with the perpetration of bullying behavior; emotional and physical abuse at home correlated with both victimization and bullying at school. In several studies, Finkelhor and his colleagues (Finkelhor et al., 2007a, 2007b; Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005b) surveyed a national sample of over 1,000 children for the occurrence of different types of victimization: unfortunately, they conflated peer victimization and sibling victimization into the same category despite the fact that they are different phenomena, albeit with similar characteristics. The authors found that bullied children often experience several forms of abuse including sexual, physical, and emotional abuse and peer victimization as well as being witnesses to violence. While victimization was correlated with other forms of abuse, 50 per cent of the children who were bullied did not have other forms of abuse or aversive family characteristics. This finding lends credence to the idea that there is a cohort of children who are chosen at random as targets of bullying. Holt, Finkelhor, and Kaufman-Kantor (2007) confirm the existence of a group of youth victims who have not experienced related traumas.

Effects of Bullying

A great deal of research has been done into the association between bullying and its negative effects⁷. It has been established that bullying and other problems within the peer system are antecedents of global problems with adjustment and psychopathology in children (Bukowski & Adams, 2005). Children who have been bullied or who themselves engage in bullying for an extensive period of time are at risk for problems during childhood such as lower academic performance and school attendance (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997; Cunningham, 2007; Holt et al., 2007; Sharp et al., 2000; Shellard & Turner, 2004; Wentzel & Asher., 1995); lower self-esteem (Mynard, Joseph, et al., 2000; O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001; Rigby & Slee, 2001; Salmon, James, & Smith, 1998); depression (Haynie et al., 2001; Erling Roland, 2002; Seals & Young, 2003); generally poorer mental health (Petersen & Rigby, 1999; Rigby, 1999, 2000); anxiety and poor physical health (Baldry, 2004; Craig, 1998; Slee, 1994); suicidal ideation and gestures (Brunstein Klomek et al., 2008; Carney, 2000; Kaltiala-Heino et al., 1999); and withdrawn behaviors (Baldry, 2004).

Bullying contributes to problems with both academic performance and school climate, often depressing academic scores for an entire school (Ballard, Argus, & Remley, 1999; Clarke & Kiselica, 1997; S.W. Twemlow et al., 2001). Bullying has a negative impact on learning for children with all active roles in bullying, including bystanders for whom the bullying of peers may be at best a distraction from learning and at worst a source of ongoing anxiety (Lumsden, 2002). Victims were more often absent

⁷ The terms “effects” and “sequelae” are used interchangeably. The term “sequelae” will be used in this paper when the term “effect” is used to denote effects other than bullying sequelae.

from school than non-victims and expressed less enjoyment in life (Ballard et al., 1999; P. K. Smith & Sharp, 1994; S. W. Twemlow, 2004).

Another effect of bully involvement may be disturbances in the process of identity formation (A. van Hoof, Raaijmakers, van Beel, Hale, & Aleva, 2008); however, to date, no research has been done into the formation of identity in children experiencing bullying. Nevertheless, the totality of the effects literature shows a close corollary to identity formation as the items in identity formation questionnaires involve most of the same measures of social life, cognition, emotion, and behavior as are used in the effects literature.

Effects on Physical and Perceived Physical Well-Being

The physical effects of bullying have been firmly and clearly established (Baldry, 2004; Faust & Forehand, 1994; Hodges & Perry, 1999; Legkauskas & Jakimaviciute, 2007; Paquette & Underwood, 1999). The immediate physical effects include stomach aches, headaches, sleeping problems, and other physical complaints. Srabstein (2006) in a national study found that victims as well as bullies report a wide set of physical problems, including headaches, stomach aches, sleep disturbance, and backaches. These symptoms are due, in part, to a somaticization of anxiety or due to hypochondriacal attempts to avoid school.

Victimization experiences, for a large percentage of affected children, have immediate physical consequences that have a negative impact on the quality of the child's life. Empirical evidence supports an association between victimization and a set of immediate physical symptoms, especially in studies that measure contemporaneous

bullying. This is a clear indication that children are suffering as a result of bullying, and that the suffering is felt in the body.

Effects on Cognitive and Affective Well-Being

Even in the absence of other risk factors in the life of a child, a single or short-term experience of bullying and peer rejection can negatively affect the child's self-esteem and emotional well-being (Arora, 1996; P. K. Smith & Levan, 1995). For example, the victim of orchestrated relational aggression may experience the sudden loss of a peer network after a lifetime of stable and healthy peer relations, precipitating a sudden, severe depression (Simmons, 2000).

Sourander, Helstela, and Piha (2000) found that victimization and bullying were both associated with lower levels of social competencies and high externalizing behavior, such as aggression and hyperactivity in children who bully; and, in victims, high internalizing, including depression and anxiety problems as scored on the Achenbach Youth Behavior Checklist (Achenbach, 1991; Achenbach & Rescoria, 2001). The children themselves reported feelings of ineffectiveness and interpersonal problems. Victims were found to exhibit both high levels of psychotic symptoms and internalizing behavior (Forero, McLellan, Rissel, & Bauman, 1999).

Children involved in bullying are at higher risk for suicide than their non-bully-involved peers (Cleary, 2000; Finkelhor et al., 2007a, 2007b; Kaltiala-Heino et al., 1999; Kim & Leventhal, 2008; Omigbodun et al., 2008; Rigby, 1998; E. Roland, 2002). In a systematic review of the 39 studies on bullying and suicide, Kim and colleagues (2008) found that, despite the methodological problems of comparing studies that used differing

measures of victimization, both bullies and victims are at greater risk for suicidal thoughts and attempts, with children who are bully-victims at the highest risk.

Kaltiala-Heino et al. (1999) also found that children at highest risk for suicidal symptoms were bully-victims, with a 12:1 odds ratio. An odds ratio is used to evaluate risk in epidemiological studies; it is the number of events divided by the number of non-events (Cook, 2002). Bullies were seen as at risk with an 8.7:1 odds ratio; victims were 5.7:1 times more at risk⁸. A fuller study might gather data on other risk factors in the children's environments, such as abuse and neglect, that may also explain these elevated levels of suicide and depression (Finkelhor et al., 2007b; Legkauskas & Jakimaviciute, 2007).

In another study of depression and suicide, Brunstein-Klomek and colleagues (2008) studied 2,342 high school students and found that both victims and bullies are at higher risk for depression and suicidal ideation as well as actual suicide attempts.

Bullies and victims were found to be more frequently referred for psychiatric consultation than their non-bully-involved peers (Kumpulainen et al., 1998; Kumpulainen, Rasanen, & Puura, 2001; Rigby, 1998, 2000), with bully-victims almost 7 times more likely to be referred for psychiatric consultation (Kumpulainen et al. 1998). Involvement in bullying in early childhood predicted psychiatric symptoms in adolescence (Kumpulainen & Rasanen, 2000) for both bullies and victims. Roland (2002) conducted an extensive examination of the effects of bully involvement on mental and physical health and social support. His study investigated bullying among 2,088 Norwegian children in the 8th grade. Roland selected a sample of children who identified

⁸ While the lower rates for victims appear counterintuitive, they may result from the significant percentage of victims who are chosen at random and may have significant resources for protection.

themselves as having been bullied within the past week: 5% met the criteria; this narrow lens makes it difficult to distinguish transitory victims with a brief experience of victimization from those whose bullying had been ongoing. However, within that small group, the author found a very strong association between peer victimization (as Roland tends to term the phenomenon of bullying) and both anxiety and depression. Bullies and their victims scored higher on depression and measures of suicidal ideation and gestures compared to a group that was not involved in bullying. The sample of those contemporaneously bullied shows that anxiety is high during episodes of bullying, as those children being bullied may experience symptoms of stress, such as trouble sleeping and eating, that are directly related to bullying as an environmental condition.

The Effect of Bullying on Social and Geographical Space

Few bullying researchers have looked at bullying from the perspective of its spatial effects. An exception is the mapping of high school spaces by social work researchers in Michigan (Astor & Meyer, 1999; Astor, Meyer, & Behre, 1999; Astor, Meyer, & Pitner, 2001). These authors identified “unowned spaces” where children are at higher risk for violent encounters; the authors, however, did not distinguish bullying from other violent acts. A small number of geographers have started to look at bullying as creating “tyrannical space,” referring to the changes that bullying and other forms of victimization make in the environment (Andrews & Chen, 2006; Percy-Smith & Matthews, 2001). Several studies, without explicitly defining the issue as spatial, measure children’s perceptions of their physical space, by determining the children’s sense of safety or anxiety about being in school (Berthold & Hoover, 2000; Glew, Fan, Katon,

Rivara, & Kernic, 2005; Juvonen et al., 2000). This element of bullying will be more fully explored in the systematic review below.

Social Space

Where physical space is bounded by clear, physical limits, social space is more diffusely bounded and involves social skills and social bonds without physical manifestations that can be detected directly, though researchers can infer lack of connection by measuring friendship networks through interviews and observation. The social space of children victimized by bullies appears to be profoundly affected by their bullying experiences and leads to, or is correlated with, problems of social connection and social competence. Several separate studies (Moultapa, Valente, Gallaher, Rohrbach, & Unger, 2004; A. D. Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999) as well as a canon of studies conducted by Gary Ladd and Becky Kochenderfer-Ladd (Buhs & Ladd, 2001; Buhs, Ladd, & Herald, 2006; B.J. Kochenderfer-Ladd & Wardrop, 2001; Ladd & Burgess, 2001; Ladd et al., 1997; Ladd & Troop Gordon, 2003, 2005) shed a great deal of light on the social lives of victimized children.

Social skills, is another diffuse concept that refers to a large set of qualities, actions, and perceptions that defy easy definition (Segrin, 2000). Not only is the concept diffuse, it is highly context-sensitive and changes over time. A person may need to use a different set of social skills depending on her role and that role's orientation to various social contexts (Brunkhost, 1986), so a child may need to use certain skills with adults and another, far more dynamic set of skills with peers. Peer contexts vary and fragment as children create communities of interest that become richer as the children progress

through adolescence: each context may have a jargon, a dress code, and a set of behaviors that are unique at least in some feature.

Victimization and social competence are highly entwined concepts as the one affects the other. Problems with social competence and social connectedness are both a cause and a consequence of victimization (B.J. Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996). Pellegrini and colleagues (1996) found that victimized children were significantly more isolated: they had the fewest reciprocated friendships (the independent agreement between two children that they recognize each other as friends), and were generally least liked by their peers. An isolated child is at higher risk for being chosen as a target, and the victimization limits or eliminates the child's opportunity to learn social skills. Since social skills within childhood are constantly evolving, even a child who enters school with a good set of social skills may quickly fall behind her peers if she finds herself isolated within the peer group.

The research of Ellis and Zarbatany (2007) finds a similar pattern of withdrawal, and the authors also conclude that there is a social cost to befriending or maintaining a friendship with a targeted child: the friend of the target may be putting herself at risk of becoming a target as result of the friendship and may experience a lowering of social status.

Under some circumstances, withdrawal can be used as a strategy to avoid further bullying (L.D. Hanish & Guerra., 2000). Kogan and Chandan (unpublished data) observed victims using this strategy as well as non-victims who quietly and routinely absented themselves from situations in which they were at risk for being bullied.

Bullying as an Antecedent of Future Problems

Several studies examine the role bullying experiences play in the formation of later problems, particularly later aggression (Coie, Lochman, Terry, & Hyman, 1992; Newman, Fox, Harding, Mehta, & Roth, 2004; Vossekuil et al., 2002). The cohort of children taking part in the longitudinal studies begun in the 1980s in Scandinavia is now entering late adolescence, and the first study has recently been published (Sourander et al., 2007); it links early bully involvement with criminality in late adolescence and early adulthood. Earlier US studies found that early peer rejection contributes to adolescent aggression (Coie, et al., 1992), lower psychological well-being and academic underachievement (Chen, Chang, Liu, & He, 2008; Glew et al., 2005; Ialongo, Vaden-Kiernan, & Kellam, 1998; Schwartz, Gorman, Duong, & Nakamoto, 2008; Schwartz et al., 2005; Wentzel & Asher., 1995). Both peer rejection and aggressiveness are predictors of several disorders that appear during adolescence (Coie et al., 1992). From an inverse perspective, positive peer relationship is a predictor of future social adjustment (Crick, 1996; Hodges & Perry, 1999).

Persons who were bullied and/or peer rejected as children may experience negative sequelae that endure into adulthood (Crick, 1996; Kokko & Pulkkinen, 2000). While there are, as yet, no longitudinal studies that have followed victimized children fully into adulthood, Ambert (1994) coincidentally found evidence showing that bullying experiences in childhood are still deeply felt in early adulthood. The author gathered 1,350 autobiographical sketches over 15 years from her undergraduate students at a public university. Students were asked to describe what made them happy and unhappy during their childhoods, pre- and post-puberty. The students reported that negative peer

interactions, including bullying, racist, and sexist actions, had more detrimental impact lasting into the present day compared to abuse at the hands of a parent. While many students disclosed other forms of abuse, including physical and sexual abuse, the consensus was that the bullying experiences were more emotionally damaging.

A few studies show some evidence that bullying and other negative peer experiences have sequelae that last into adulthood. In an oft-cited longitudinal study, Caspi and colleagues (1998) delineated several variables associated with chronic adult unemployment and underemployment in the United Kingdom. The authors found general negative peer experiences in childhood to be associated with labor market under-performance in adulthood. Miller and Vaillancourt (2007), in a retrospective study, found that girls who were indirectly bullied tended to exhibit perfectionist tendencies as young adults, and Sourander, et al. (2007) found that early bullying behavior was associated with criminal behavior in youths 16 to 19 years old, while victimization was not associated with later criminal activity.

Kokko and Pulkkinen (2000) advise caution, however, in drawing conclusions about associations and correlations between early bullying and peer rejection and later sequelae; they suggest that the mechanisms of “interactional cumulative continuity,” the selection of relationships and environments that support and propagate anti-social (or pro-social) behaviors, would be as likely explanations of the presence of adult adjustment problems as early bullying. Cumulative continuity operates when children with an aggressive and anti-social peer group accumulate negative experiences, including constricting and punitive disciplinary actions; these children tend to maintain the same friends or similar aggressive friendships over their entire life span. Kokko and Pulkkinen

say that the process by which these children are affected is likely to be continuous rather than discrete.

Sourander and colleagues (2007), in a longitudinal study of Finnish males, found no association between the experience of being bullied and youth crime and some evidence that the bullies were at higher risk for adult criminality. Garbarino (2002) and Gilgun (2001) both claim that school bullying is a contributing factor to the mass murders of students by other students. Both authors base their assertions on qualitative research done with the perpetrators of highly publicized school shootings as well as the survivors of the shootings who describe the murderers as having been extensively bullied for years prior to the shootings.

One extensive data-mining study supports Gilgun and Garbarino's assertions in that bullying was a significant factor in the lives of many children who perpetrated school shootings. The study, commissioned by the US Secret Service (Vossekuil et al., 2002), analyzed hundreds of transcripts of interviews undertaken by police officers, psychologists, teachers, and social workers with 41 children who perpetrated school shootings between 1974 and 2000. The content was coded and analyzed in an attempt to uncover the intrapsychic or familial variables that could help identify potential shooters and thereby prevent future school shootings. The most salient variable discovered in that study is that 71% of school shooters were victimized by school bullies. The authors conclude that educators need to make each school a place where students feel safe and valued, and that neglecting problematic social interaction among students could yield dire consequences.

Noted educational researcher Cheryl Graves (2004), in a conversation about bullying in the media, stated that parental neglect may be a more significant factor than bullying in school shootings, pointing out that the parents of some of the child murderers claimed they did not know that their child had a collection of assault weapons though the police discovered the weapons in plain sight in the children's bedrooms.

Bullying plays in long-term sequelae, bullying appears to be a chronic, although not always acute, environmental stressor. Finkelhor (1995) states that bullying is a source of ongoing stress for the victim as well as an obstacle to adequate development of social skills and cognition for both the bully and the victim.

Evidence of Policy Support for Bullying

Kamenetsky (1996) indirectly contributes to the bullying literature with her review and analysis of children's literature during the years that the National Socialist (Nazi) party dominated Germany and much of occupied Europe. German educators of the Nazi era directly and explicitly encouraged bullying, while not using that term itself. Kamenetsky points out that this was most evident in the curriculum they used to train children enrolled in Hitler Youth groups⁹. The Nazis "successfully" used the Hitler Youth groups to develop a corps of adults to take jobs preparing countries for Nazi occupation or in the death camps (Office of United States Chief of Counsel, 1946); it can be assumed that the children's literature was developed and disseminated expressly to aid in that goal.

In one particularly frightening example of Nazi children's literature disseminated through the Hitler Youth, in a children's book whose title was translated as *Never Trust a*

⁹ Kamenetzky (1996) demonstrates that all children's literature of that period was developed according to specific guidelines from the Nazi Department of Education.

Jew on the Green Heath (Kamenetsky, 1996), cartoon depictions show children how to bully and exclude Jewish children on the playground. These illustrations bear a striking resemblance to cartoon depictions of bullying Smith and colleagues (2000) showed their subjects in order to study bullying across linguistic and national barriers. Kogan and Chandan (2004) found that some children, parents, and teachers support childhood bullying, in part for its perceived positive role in preparing children for adult roles of enforcement and domination. While an analogy to the Nazis may seem distasteful, their idea that bullying prepares children for adult roles of coercion is identical to the ideas of the Nazi Department of Education.

Anti-Bullying Interventions

With federal governments and states implementing policy and laws against bullying (Limber & Small, 2003), intervention programs are proliferating (Blakely, 2004; McGrath, 2007; Scaglione & Scaglione, 2006); however, there is scant evidence for the effectiveness of these programs (Rigby, 2002b; J. D. Smith et al., 2004; P. K. Smith, D. J. Pepler, et al., 2004; Stevens et al., 2000). Some evidence suggests that certain interventions may actually increase bullying or simply make it less visible to adults (D.J. Pepler et al., 1994; Vreeman & Carroll, 2007).

Despite Olweus's assertion that individual school characteristics may determine the prevalence of bullying, only a small number of bullying intervention models have been in existence long enough to have been evaluated, and none of the bullying programs evaluated would meet standards of evidence-based practice (Rigby, 2002a; J. D. Smith et al., 2004; J. D. Smith, Stewart, & Cousins, 2003). Rigby (Rigby, 2002a) in his meta-analytic study of anti-bullying intervention programs shows that none of the studies

included in his analysis sought to determine the relative effects of their multiple components or their dosage; evaluation methodology varied in quality and criteria; and many evaluation studies were applied in only one geographical area often with a homogeneous population.

While there are several models of anti-bullying interventions, most utilize three program components: whole school policies, social skill-building curricula, and social and behavioral group work (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007).

This section will review a few of the major intervention models that have been implemented over the past three decades and recent models that offer a significant variation or innovative program component. All programs reviewed have one or all of the abovementioned three components, and some recent programs have added new components, for example, legal accountability, in states where schools can be held liable if bullying is not dealt with effectively (McGrath, 2005).

Olweus (1991, 1994), surveying the results of several intervention programs using his Olweus Anti-Bullying Program (now called the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program) over the previous decade, reported a reduction of bullying and an increase in teachers' willingness to intervene. Since most of the data were gathered before the more specific contemporary definition of bullying was articulated, it can be assumed that general aggression is conflated with bullying in the results. Several future evaluations of the same program model were unable to replicate Olweus's results (D.J. Pepler et al., 1994; Vreeman & Carroll, 2007); however, all these used a contemporary definition of bullying as opposed to the original study's wider definition. The Olweus model was implemented and evaluated in four Canadian schools (Pepler, Zeigler, & Charach, 1994)

over a period of a year and a half. The results were mixed at best with a small decrease in the number of children reporting abuse within the week previous to the post-test, but with a small increase in the proportion of children who reported being frequently bullied. No control group was used with which to compare rates of bullying.

Vreeman and Carroll (2007) in a meta-analysis of bullying intervention programs, show that, while the programs may reduce the number of bullying incidents, the number of bullies and victims may still remain stable or actually increase. These seemingly contradictory results may be explained by a number of concerning reasons: perhaps children who were formerly only overtly aggressive had started to bully in a *de facto* changing of the guard, or children may have changed the way they bullied in order to remain below the attention of ever more vigilant adults.

One US study purports to show that the Olweus model significantly reduces bullying. Black and Jackson (2007) report observing a very large reduction of bullying in one school after four years of intervention. The authors used an interrupted time-series observation methodology implemented by external evaluators who reported a 45% decrease in observed bullying. While the authors claimed to be implementing the Olweus model, they added significant program components, including the separation of ages and genders and the inclusion of highly adult-supervised and organized social activities at lunch and recess. These new program components would logically account for the large reduction of observed bullying simply because of the limitations they place on the autonomy of all children including bullies. The Black and Jackson model may in fact be iatrogenic, with the cure being more costly than the problem, due to the children's lack of opportunity to practice social skills in an autonomous environment.

Salmivalli (2001) showed modest reduction in bullying by adapting the Olweus model in a different way, by including program components that are intended to limit the ancillary roles of bullying. In a posttest after six months of intervention, students reported a 15% decrease in bullying. Frey, et al. (2005) studied a similar intervention program that incorporated Salmivalli's approach which also showed some success in reducing the incidence of observed bullying. These studies suggest that intervention programs that aim to reduce children's ancillary roles in bullying are promising and worthy of future study.

Ducharme, Folino, and DeRosie (2008) suggested that the minimal effectiveness of social- skill building intervention programs (J. D. Smith et al., 2004; P. K. Smith, D. J. Pepler, et al., 2004) result from too weak a dosage, and, in response, the authors developed an intensive social-skills program which they implemented with two groups of four children with severe bullying involvement. The authors theorized, after intensive time-series observation of children at play, that the ability to give in to the will of others was the core component skill for positive peer interaction which they term "acquiescence." The researchers hypothesized that teaching acquiescence would lead to a broader range of positive social skills and positive interpersonal experiences. While the authors show some moderate improvement in bullying, the intensity of the intervention makes it costly both in terms of labor and time, with 60 academic hours taken up by the program each year.

Legal considerations are also entering the field of bullying prevention and reduction and should be considered in developing future intervention programs. McGrath's (2007) model uses the whole school policy and social-skills building components and adds in procedures to protect the schools from liability in jurisdictions

where there are State laws against bullying. McGrath, a lawyer, adds program components that require the schools to maintain procedures and records that will protect the children against bullying and protect the schools in any future legal procedures. McGrath offers no empirical evidence of her program's effectiveness --a program that is widely marketed --nor have any outcome studies been published to date.

The few program models that show positive results demand a tremendous concerted effort on the part of school staff, parents, and students. This puts anti-bullying and social-skills promotion in direct competition with academic curriculum. In the US, at the time this paper is being written, schools are under pressure to raise standardized test scores as part of the *No Child Left Behind* initiative and schools may not be amenable to introducing programs that would take time away from academic teaching unless the program positively affects test scores. While there is a correlation between bullying and low academic performance, none of the intervention programs' effectiveness studies cited above provide data showing significant improvement in either academic performance or test scores.

Despite the lack of significant intervention results for individual intervention strategies, the effects of victimization may be mitigated in certain countries with powerful policies and well-funded national intervention efforts. Due (2005) directly studied the effects of bullying cross-nationally and found that US and Israeli children experienced more severe levels of symptoms than countries with long standing anti-bullying efforts. The same comparison can be extrapolated from the results of Wolke's

(2000)¹⁰ UK study that shows markedly less severity of anxious and depressive symptoms than the results for those variables in this review of US studies.

It is likely that victimization is experienced less severely in environments where children are supported and, if necessary, treated as they are in the UK, Scandinavia and Commonwealth nations in which bullying has been seen as a significant social problem worthy of dedicated and relatively well-funded policies.

Conclusion

The effects of bullying are diffuse. A cursory look at the results of the studies reviewed below prior to the more systematic analysis of the results show that bullying is at least partially responsible for anxiety, symptoms of post-traumatic stress, depression, suicide, school problems, aggression, future low employment and future violence. Measures of these variables, as well as the prevalence of bullying itself, vary so widely that making comparisons between studies is not always plausible. Bullying is measured variously by direct observation, peer report, self report, teacher report; operational definitions of bullying may be limited to one aspect of aggression or inclusive of a range of bullying actions; and the temporal criteria for determining the degree to which bullying occurs differ from contemporaneous bullying to retrospective periods of up to three years. Measures used to investigate variables such as depression and anxiety range from standard instruments such as the Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist (1991) to author-created items on questionnaires. A perusal of the studies into the consequences of bullying would lead a reader to conclude that being bullied is associated with a bewildering complex of negative sequelae.

¹⁰ Unlike Due, Wolke did not perform a cross-national study but her results indicate a less statistically significant level of emotional distress among the children studied than any comparable US study.

While bullying is an emerging social problem in the US and an established social problem in Commonwealth and European countries, there is no evidence that bullying can either be reduced or prevented on a school-wide or district-wide basis (Rigby, 2002a; J. D. Smith et al., 2004). Dubin (1978) points out that for interventions in the applied sciences to be effective a theoretical explanation for the underlying phenomenon is required. A theoretical model that can explain both the etiology of bullying and the mechanisms through which bullying affects children is also likely to result in more effective interventions .

There has been very little research seeking to build or test a theory within the field of bullying research. None of the theoretical models currently reflected in the bullying literature explicitly consider the dynamics and effects of power abuse; yet, this single variable distinguishes bullying from aggression. The next section will survey the literature on power with the aim of finding parallels to the bullying phenomenon by exploring the links between the literature on bullying and the literature on power.

Review of the Literature on Power

The power qualities of bullying are the central concern of this writer's project, yet a thorough archival search of the bullying literature has yielded no study specifically and directly linking the literature on power with the literature on bullying. In this section, the power literature will be briefly reviewed and then related to the topic of bullying.

Theory and research of power involve a range social processes and are important fields of study in several social science disciplines, such as sociology (Dahrendorf, 1958; Parsons, 1969), organizational theory (Kearins, 1998), political science (Gaventa, 1980; Giddens, 1995; Luhman, 1990), social and community psychology (Rappaport, 1987),

marriage and family studies (Safilios-Rothschild, 1970; Straus & Gelles, 1979, 1990), and social work (Guittierrez, 1990; Guittierrez & Ortega, 1991; Kondrat, 1995; Levy, 1990). Contemporary power theorists and researchers tend to cross disciplines such as philosophy and psychology (Foucault, 1973, 1977a, 1977b, 1978, 1997); sociology, philosophy, and linguistics (Habermas, 1971, 1979, 1984, 1987, 1996, 2000, 2001a); and literary criticism (Borradori, 2003; Derrida, 1974, 1988).

Definitions of Power

The first problem in the study of power is that there has yet to be a consensus on the definition for the concept of power itself (Dahl, 1957; Keifer, 1984; Lukes, 1974; Parsons, 1969). Just as the concept of bullying is inclusive of a great many qualities and actions undertaken by individuals or collectives for a myriad of motivations, the concept of “social power” is comprised of a myriad of actions and processes. Also as with bullying, the physical aspects of power can be more easily quantified by examining the control and distribution of resources, personal attributes, and access to the political process, than can the socially constructed aspects of power that lie within our subjective experience of the world (Bachrach & Botwinick., 1992; Foucault, 1973, 1978, 1997; Kearins, 1998; Luhman, 1990; Pfeffer, 1997).

Parsons (1969) says that there are three contexts that explain the difficulty in developing a consensus for the definition of power: the concept itself is diffuse; the relation between the coercive and consensual aspects of power has not been clearly established¹¹; and the notion that power is a *zero-sum* problem poses difficulty. In

¹¹ Parsons wrote this before the ideas of Foucault, Derrida, and Habermas, among others, enriched the dialogue on power.

reality, certain aspects of power can be seen as having finite properties, called *zero-sum*, while other aspects may not be bounded.

Parsons (1969) subscribes to the zero-sum idea of power, which is consistent with his structural functionalist idea that uses as its dominant metaphor for social relations the flow of goods and services in the marketplace. The zero-sum idea proposes that, like money and most resources, there is a finite supply of power, and that increasing the power of one group or person will, somewhere in the system, decrease the power of another. In fact, Parsons equates money and power as similar symbolic media in that paper or coin is invested with a meaning based on consensus.

Weber (1947) defines power as "the probability that one actor in a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his (sic) will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests" (Weber, 1947, p. 152). Weber provides a schema through which power is exercised through authority based on different qualities broadly described as tradition, rationality, and charisma. Parsons (1969) presents a framework for how complex social systems function by adapting to new situations, by attaining goals, by integrating or harmonizing with other systems, and by including a set of latent patterns that reproduce culture and institutions.

Though Foucault's encyclopedic research project concerns the evolution of the technology of power, he rarely uses the term "power" itself. When he does, he defines power neutrally as a productive network that includes qualities, processes, or activities that promote or resist change in human systems (Foucault, 1977b). Habermas also rarely uses the term "power" but, in elucidating the instrumental and communicative sources of social action, he covers the gamut of power relations (as will be fully explained below).

Luhman (1990), while acknowledging the objective manifestations of power, points out that power is often situated in social relationships in which at least some part of the action could have been different, no matter what the state of the power relations; with this symbolic or subjective aspect of power, power would not be considered a finite quantity.

Models and Theories of Power

Bachrach and Baratz (1962) developed a model with two dimensions of power that is still widely used in the political theory literature today and will be helpful in locating the various forms of bullying catalogued by bullying researchers. The first dimension of power is the most easily quantified: it includes observable behavior, such as overt use of physical strength and resources. The second dimension of power includes techniques that are employed to deter access to political power by keeping issues off the political agenda; these less obvious uses of power include “non-decision-making” and “mobilization of bias.”

A third dimension of power exists on what would now be termed a socially constructed (Burger & Luckman, 1966) plane, as in Foucault’s analysis of how power influences behavior through knowledge, including our conceptions of health (Foucault, 1973), mental health (Foucault, 1976), justice (Foucault, 1977a), and sexuality (Foucault, 1978). For example, in Foucault’s analysis of the mechanics of state power, he traces the evolution of the techniques of power: from coercive forms exercised directly on the body, through public displays of torture and execution, to more remote and subjective techniques of state control.

Foucault (1977) examines the evolution of the mechanics of power over time across the dimensions described by Bachrach and Barantz (1962). Initially, power was

exercised directly by the monarch and his proxies against the individual body, the first power dimension. Before there were codified laws, local lords meted out justice usually in the form of capital punishment: torture, bodily humiliation, or execution. With the codification of laws, the sovereign began to be distanced from the body, and power mechanics moved into the second, interpersonal, dimension.

Foucault (1977a) describes the architectural innovation of the “panoptikon,”—a plan in which prison barracks are built around a central atrium from which the inmates can easily be watched --as one of the most significant inventions in Western history. The dossier, a system of retaining files on individual citizens in a central location is another form of panoptikon in that it allows authority easy surveillance of large numbers of people. Subsequent civil engineering used the panoptikon principle in city planning, as in Napoleon III’s redesign of Paris in which miles of medieval alleys and crooked streets were razed and replaced with wide straight avenues amenable to surveillance and easy access of troops (Saalman, 1971). Foucault sees the panoptikon and the dossier as a revolution in the technology of power, allowing control to be exercised remotely.

Foucault furthers his analysis of how power is socially constructed when he describes that power is exercised through knowledge (Foucault, 1977b) and can extend to our own bodies in the form of sexual constraints and stereotypes (Foucault, 1978) and the forms and qualities of mental processes (Foucault, 1976).

Habermas’s early work closely mirrors Foucault’s in two meaningful ways but differs in an even more significant way: Habermas, like Foucault, investigated how knowledge is formed by human interests, and, like Foucault, he surveyed an enormous body of literature. Foucault, however, exhibits a flare for dramatic narrative, drawing the

reader into his highly abstract philosophy with stories taken from history; at times, Foucault's enthusiasm for narrative leads him, at times, towards doubtful associations and poor scholarship (Kaiser, 2000). By contrast, Habermas's scholarship is meticulous, though his work may lack narrative verve. Habermas abandoned his interest-based theory, knowledge constitutive interests, in favor of communicative action which he uses to pursue his project of developing socially-just constitutional states.

Derrida's contribution to the study of power derives from his textual project. Derrida changed the frame of literary analysis by making all characters in narratives equally important as protagonists and by determining the assumptions embedded in the text that reveal the social forces acting on the writer to constrain the narrative, the actions of social power. These techniques of "decentering" and "deconstructing" the narrative can help social workers and their clients see the world differently.

Perhaps Derrida's most profound contribution to social work will be the idea of "*differance*." Derrida says that *differance* is a "non-concept" as it does not refer to anything that exists in reality. It is a pun on the French terms "to differ" – differer – and the English word "to defer," and refers to things that exist out of time, that are deferred, but that would exist if not for constraints in the socially constructed world (Derrida, 1988). While Derrida avoided theory and method in his work, it is this writer's opinion that his literary analysis techniques will be able to provide the social work profession with a very clear way of helping clients to analyze the social world in order to detect and unearth the hidden workings of power.

Habermas's theory of communicative action (2003; 1984, 1987) is directly based on the work of Weber and Parsons and purports to solve the problem of how systems can

experience such cataclysmic disruptions as the Nazi genocide. By adding an intersubjective paradigm, in the form of the idea of the *lifeworld*, Habermas shows how systems designed to solve problems in can develop a life of their own and diverge from their originally intended functions.

The idea of power entered the social work dialogue in the form of empowerment (Guittierrez & Ortega, 1991; Kondrat, 1995; Moreau, 1990). The meaning of empowerment is as diffuse as the meaning of power and will be examined in greater detail below; however, one can say that the common feature of the various definitions encountered in the literature is that “empowerment” is a process which increases the power of groups that are in some way oppressed. Kondrat (1995) cautions, though, that blindly empowering an individual or group may result in the oppression of another individual or group, thus he unwittingly incorporates ideas of Habermas to show how social workers can ensure that empowerment is mutual by including the interests of other individuals or groups in the communication process.

Research into Power

In this section, several research studies on power will be reviewed in an attempt to lay groundwork for the study of power qualities in bullying. The methods discussed range from studies of community power structure (Gilbert, 1972); observation of the activities of small groups (Gamson, 1982; Milgram, 1974); use of survey instruments with families; and structured interviews with members of community action groups (Guittierrez & Ortega, 1991; Keifer, 1984).

Dahrendorf (1958) expanded Marx’s notion of capital’s control of the means of production to a mechanism of social control through what he called “imperatively

coordinated associations” in which the relations of power get institutionalized as authority that has a right to dominate others. Bachrach and Botwinick (1992) suggest that there is a strong current in society that sees compliance as essential to the stability of the society; that belief mitigates the movement towards participatory democracy. Several researchers develop this theme.

During and after World War II, a number of critical theorists living in the US (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Nevitt Sanford, 1982) used social-science technology to develop an instrument that they hoped would help identify individuals at risk for becoming dangerously oppressive. The so-called “F-Scale”, or Fascist Scale, was updated by Aletmeyer and his colleagues (1981) by including items from cognitive research into inflexible thinking that they considered to contribute to authoritarian personality and action.

Timothy Leary (1956) integrated some of Adorno’s items into the MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory), the preeminent personality instrument of its time, to include measures of interpersonal power. Leary developed two sub-scales to measure dominance globally, the DOM and LOV: the DOM scale measures -- items were grouped into a series of behavioral categories which he classes as either maladaptive or adaptive: autocratic/managerial, dependent/ docile, masochistic/self-effacing; the LOV scale measures behaviors such as acceptance of others, affection, and the tendency and desire for affiliation. Leary’s scale has not been used widely¹² but is one of the few

¹² In fact, the scale was only available through the Harvard Library which only owns one copy. This may be largely due to done to Leary’s academic reputation by his later activities promoting the use of psilocybin and LSD for which he lost his academic position.

examples of early power research that is predicated on a neutral rather than either a positive or negative view of power.

Two prominent researchers on social power, Milgram and Zimbardo, conducted experiments that were subsequently determined to have put their subjects at risk for emotional and psychic damage. Milgram (1974) conducted a series of experiments intended to test the limits of obedience in which subjects were made to believe they were administering electric shocks to “learners.” An actor representing an authority figure, a researcher at Yale University, enjoined the research subjects to administer greater and greater levels of shock to “learners” whenever they made mistakes in learning word pairs. The experimenter assured the subjects that there would be no permanent damage that could result from any shock they administered. Subjects believed they were actually administering shocks, while in fact, the learners were actors paid to sham reactions of pain and protest. Despite clear labeling on the devices used to administer the “shock,” fully two-thirds of the subjects administered shocks at levels that would have been deadly had the shocks been real. The degree to which people were willing to obey authority was far higher than the author predicted.

Zimbardo (1972), in a similar obedience, The Stanford Prison Experiment, recruited subjects to act as prisoners and prison guards and created a make-shift prison in which the roles were played out. Zimbardo found that acting out the role of prison guard elicited sadistic and abusive behaviors in research subjects.

Milgram’s and Zimbardo’s experiments were widely believed to have traumatized the subjects-- some of whom have lived for decades with the guilt that they are capable of harming others-- contributing greatly to the movement to promote ethical

experimentation on human subjects (Blass, 2000); however, their research speaks to issues of power and, although unintentionally, its psychological effects in that some subjects experienced emotional damage.

Gamson (1968) used an elaborate technique of misdirection to study what he called “Rebellion Careers.” He secretly audiotaped volunteers discussing whether they will comply with an unethical request by researchers to argue in favor of corporate interests in a fictional trial in civil court. One-third of the participants were requested to argue in favor of an oil company’s position and attempted to sway the others to make false statements on videotapes that they were told would be used in a civil trial. The researcher then left the room for a period of time. Gamson was trying to create a scenario conducive to rebellion but not easily spotted by his subjects as a hoax. A successful rebellion career was seen as a unanimous decision not to sign the affidavit allowing the fictional oil company to use the videotape in the fictional trial. Gamson then analyzed and classified the rebellion activities into seven categories of relevant action: compliance, evasion, rim talk (questions and discussions about the scenario), dissent, resistance, direct action, and preparation for future action. The author was originally attempting to study the actions of defiance against authority; the high levels of compliance to authority he found had not been anticipated.

Milgram, Zimbardo, and Gamson’s studies do not provide a methodology to study bullying among children due to the obvious ethical constraints of putting children into potentially damaging situations. However, the entirety of the literature on the effects of bullying can be viewed as research into the effects of power imbalance on target children. What would not be ethical in a research scenario or experimental design is available

through the study of the secondary data into the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive effects of bullying. Finding ethical and safe ways to study the conditions under which children resist oppressive and abusive authority could help in the design of bullying intervention programs; narratives of successful rebellion against bullying may be available within virtually all victimized cohorts.

In a study more aligned with today's ideas of protecting human subjects, Keiffer (1998) looked at the process of community activism and the emergence of individual activists and their "transition from powerlessness to sociopolitical empowerment." Keiffer chose a sample of 15 community activists, all of whom acknowledged that their involvement in community activism precipitated a personal transformation. The participants were active in more than one issue area, took a proactive rather than a reactive position vis-a-vis social action, and had an ongoing commitment to social action. Keiffer conducted interviews with the participants using the technique of dialogic retrospection whereby the researcher involved the participants in a process of analyzing their own data and elaborating the meaning of their personal transformation.

Keiffer found that there are a set of skills that include an awakening consciousness of power dynamics through praxis, or a "circular relationship of experience and reflection through which actions evoke new understanding, which then provoke new and more effective action," and a set of skills to deal with constructive conflict. The author describes empowerment as a "continuing construction of a multi-dimensional participatory competence" (p29). Keiffer suggests that further research with larger samples will reveal a set of competencies related to community empowerment.

A study of children who either overcame or avoided bullying could employ a variant of Keiffer's methodology. One could use Keiffer's method to study "emancipation careers" akin to Gamson's "rebellion careers." It is essential to learn from the experience of people who have successfully negotiated bullying and other oppressive power experiences. This could lead to intervention programs that promote the safe resistance to abuses of power.

Empowerment and Social Work

This section will discuss the history of empowerment and look at the research that has directly studied empowerment.

As already mentioned, the concept of empowerment has yet to be defined in a universally accepted way. Keiffer defines empowerment (as cited above) as the "continuing construction of a multi-dimensional participatory competence" (Keifer, 1984, p. 29)(Keiffer, 1984, p. 59). Gutierrez defines empowerment as "a process of increasing personal, interpersonal, or political power so that individuals can take action to improve their life situations" (Guittierrez, 1990, p. 149); Rappaport states that empowerment is "a process, a mechanism by which people, organizations, and communities, gain mastery over their affairs" and that social problems arise from the inequality of access to resources and power among different groups in society (Rappaport, 1987). Simon (1994) sees empowerment as the development and implementation of strategies to obstruct the operation of power blocks, or, at least, to diminish their effects. Empowerment, in these authors' definitions, is the use of power in ways that address inequality across groups and minimize oppressive structures. While all of these authors speak of increasing or balancing power, they do not address how that power can be increased or balanced in an

ethical way. As has been discussed above, the symmetry inherent in Kondrat's (1995) idea of "mutual emancipation" provides a constraint: to increase power for one group while not infringing on the autonomy of other groups.

Power is essential to make change in the social world. Gutierrez (1990) claims that social workers can best create change by sharing power with their clients. She suggests a number of strategies and principles to apply to that end: accepting the client's definition of the problem; identifying and building upon existing strengths; engaging in a power analysis of the client's situation; teaching specific skills; and working with the client to mobilize resources. The goal is to reduce self-blame while increasing a sense of efficacy and personal responsibility.

Gutierrez and Ortega (1991) studied empowerment strategies among Latino college students. The authors hypothesized that an experience of group empowerment through consciousness-raising would lead to greater commitment to further participation in community activism. Gutierrez and Ortega (unpublished material referenced in Gutierrez 1991) developed their Change Strategy Scale based on subjects' responses to an anecdote about a person overcoming oppressive power.

Gutierrez and Ortega's change strategy methodology(1991) is a significant variation on Milgram's and Gamson's small group technique, in that, rather than having subjects participate in a hoax, the authors gave the subjects an anecdote and asked a set of questions designed to elicit what power strategies they would use to deal with that situation. This methodology could be more easily adapted for use with children, adolescents, in particular.

Power and Bullying Experiences

A small body of research within the bullying literature touches, directly or indirectly, on issues of power. In this subsection, these few studies will be discussed.

Power imbalance differentiates bullying from other forms of aggression. Power differential is a factor determining the consequence of an aggressive act: Different types of bullying experiences have different effects, qualitatively and quantitatively (Crothers & Levinson, 2004; Mynard, Joseph, et al., 2000), and the element of power abuse may increase or even determine the toxic effect of an aggressive action (Mynard, Joseph, et al., 2000). Non-bullying aggression, such as physical confrontations among equals, accidents, and social misunderstandings may be far less traumatic than aggressive events that occur when there is an imbalance of power.

Selman and Demorest (1984) documented the negotiation strategies of two children considered unmanageable in school settings during 50 hours of dyadic play sessions led by a therapist. They examined the strategies children used to “transform” themselves or others. The authors coded behaviors that they consider to reflect four conceptual levels of social skills development and were rated as either self-transforming or other-transforming. Using a modified event sampling procedure in which the actions of the research subjects are observed intermittently for brief periods, two observers, trained to identify negotiation strategies, took detailed notes of their observations from behind a two-way mirror. The verbal content was transcribed, coded, and analyzed. The authors offer this insight into the process of these two children:

In our view any strategy, regardless of its orientation or its developmental level, represents an attempt to exercise some kind of control over a situation. A self-transforming strategy is a particular way of controlling a situation in which the medium through which control is achieved is self-adaptation; and conversely, for

other-transforming strategies control is achieved by changing the other. The emphasis on control, however, is not limited to one developmental level; control is at the heart of all negotiation strategies. However, whereas the way that control is asserted varies between orientations, the nature of the control that is sought differs as a function of developmental level (1984, p. 303).

Selman and Demorest's methodology could be adapted to gather detailed data on children's power tactics, including instances of bullying and the responses that bullying evoked.

Mynard, Joseph, and Lawrence (2000), while not making explicit links to the theory or literature on power, explicate the specific differential effects of power imbalance and bullying. The authors studied 331 adolescents at one English secondary school in an attempt to determine whether specific types of bullying are associated with specific adverse effects. In particular, the authors tested the effects of relational, direct, and indirect bullying on self-esteem and post-traumatic stress symptoms. All the responding children were administered Mynard and Joseph's Peer-Victimization Scale (2000), the peer-victimization sub-scale of the Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1985), and were also asked to respond "yes or no" to the question of whether they had been bullied. Forty percent of respondents were identified as having been victims of bullies, fairly evenly divided between boys and girls. When the data were analyzed for this group, bullying was found to be correlated with posttraumatic stress. Relational bullying and social manipulation were found to predict posttraumatic stress. Physical bullying and low self-worth were also found to be associated, with the subscale of verbal victimization predictive of markedly lower self-worth than physical forms.

Mynard and colleagues' results would need to be replicated in order for one to draw definitive conclusions based upon them; yet, their evidence that different bullying

experiences correlate with ill effects supports two important assumptions: 1) that bullying, independent of preexisting factors, can be aversive; and 2) that social manipulation, among other bullying experiences, tends to be experienced as more aversive.

Raven and his colleagues (Raven, 1993; Schmidt, Raven, Pastorelli & Caprara, 1993; Schmidt & Raven, 1985) attempted to apply Raven and French's (1960) adaptation of Weber's (1947) power analysis to children's peer relations and bullying. The authors undertook pilot studies using a cartoon instrument that depicts French and Raven's categories of administrative power in ways that apply to the world of children's peer relations (Raven, 1993; Schmidt, Raven, Pastorelli & Caprara, 1993; Schmidt & Raven, 1985). The authors conclude that there are parallels between the power used in childhood and adult forms of power but did not pursue their research further.

Selman and Demorest's (1984) idea of self- and other-transformation as a social skill shares important qualities with Ducharme, Folino, and DeRosie's (2008) more recent study of acquiescence. The authors found acquiescence to be a fundamental social skill required for all negotiation and cooperation. Bullying may be an other-transforming strategy that children use when they are lacking in or disdainful of higher order skills: in other words, bullying is an attempt to change the social environment.

In the following section, ideas that shed light on bullying effects indirectly or tangentially will be explored.

Related Literature on Theory

Almost all the theory discussed in the bullying literature concerns the etiology of bullying rather than the nature of its effects. In this section, ideas and theories from a

variety of sources that could potentially be adapted to explain the mechanisms of effect of bullying will be briefly outlined.

Categorical Thinking

Categorical or essentialist thinking (S.A. Gelman, 2003; S. A. Gelman & Heyman, 1999; Giles, 2003) explains how bullies identify a child to victimize and may also explain how bullying experiences can be internalized by the victim, thereby causing distortions. Macrae and Bodenhausen (2000), in reviewing literature on cognition and neuroscience, suggest two separate cognitive mechanisms at play in human thought. Categorical thinking is a stable set of ideas and beliefs through which the individual learns to negotiate the invariant features of a complex world, thought to correspond to activity in the neo-cortex-- these ideas are learned slowly over time and tend to resist change; flexible thinking, possibly located in the hippocampus, involves faster learning and is sufficiently flexible to process novel events as they arise.

Macrae and Bodenhausen explore the ways that categorical thought processes can lead to stereotyping when they state that "...perceivers may use the contents of the activated knowledge structure (the theorized neo-cortical structure) to derive evaluations and impressions of a target, a process that commonly gives rise to stereotype-based judgmental outcomes (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000, p. 95)." That children in general exhibit the features of categorical thinking was established by Gelman (2003) who conducted an experiment in which children were identified descriptively or categorically in order to determine whether categorical thinking is a predisposing factor for victimization, as is asserted by critical theorists (see below). Gelman designated children into four groups: two groups were described as "children who eat carrots," and "children

who believe in creatures,” thought to be neutral stimuli; and two groups were labeled “carrot eaters” and “creature believers,” non-neutral, categorical, stimuli. Both labeled groups, carrot eaters and creature believers showed evidence of stereotyping but the descriptive groups, children who eat carrots and who believe in creatures, did not.

Categorical thinking may be responsible for much of the internalization of victimization. That some bullies choose a target based on a categorical perception seems clear in research on homophobic bullying (Dijkstra, Lindenberg, & Veenstra, 2007; Poteat & Espelage, 2007; Warwick et al., 2004), but categorical thinking may also explain some of the effects of bullying. The child who is affected by the bullying and internalizes the experiences may be applying categorical thought processes to herself in a deeply-embedded self-blaming process. To date, no research has been done on the categorical thinking of victims, but it can be hypothesized that both bullies and victims will exhibit less flexible thinking than their non-bully-involved peers. The presence of consistently negative self-evaluations among victimized children may be indirect evidence that these children have internalized a negative self-categorization. In the systematic review below, variables such as low self-esteem and low self-worth may serve as proxy indicators of categorical thinking internalized as self-blame.

Categorical thinking is a core concept of critical theory and was theorized as a component of oppressive behavior; however, none of the researchers studying the phenomenon of categorical thinking cite critical theorists in their literature reviews.

In the above discussion, categorical thinking has been viewed as a component of internalization and victimization; however, there are most likely positive outcomes of categorical thought processes as well. It seems likely that categorical processes are

involved in the deeper illocutionary bonds about which Habermas theorizes.

Commitments, covenants, and contracts have a great deal of force within human relations as breaking an oath or bond means jeopardizing one's own social connections. Much research would need to be done to determine whether the phenomena of illocutionary bonds and categorical thinking are related.

Resilience and Strengths

Resilience is another concept that has implications in this review. The construct of resilience, like power, social competence, and bullying, comprises a wide array of behaviors, qualities, and conditions (Keyes, 2004; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000), and the study of resilience is in its infancy. Resilience factors are those whose presence in a child's life will predict positive outcomes in adulthood: social competence is one of the most powerful resilience factors (Search Institute, 2007).

The primacy of social skills in the lifeworld gets empirical support from John Gottman's extensive research into marital breakdown (Gottman, 1994). Gottman, a psychologist as well as a physicist with highly developed mathematical skills, coded the speech/acts of couples as they interacted over a series of taped interactions collected over decades. Gottman and his colleagues discovered a simple mathematical formula that predicted divorce: couples who committed more than one negative speech/act in every six interactions were statistically likely to divorce; those that were able to maintain positive skills stayed together. These coded speech/acts included a range of interactions from subtle facial expressions to overt and explicit expressions of support or derision. Gottman's work can be seen as evidence of the importance of primary social skills in negotiating marriage, a primary relationship in adulthood can be deduced from Gottman's

work that children able to gain and maintain social skills will also have success in negotiating relationships in childhood, reiterating the idea that social competence is a major resilience factor. There is also a cohort of resilient children who have been bullied but do not experience ill effects: these children will likely show attributes and actions that would be considered resilient.

Unfortunately, within the bullying literature, considerations of resilience are virtually absent. Research on the factors that protect a child from victimization or the factors that mitigate the effects of victimization would be very helpful in designing effective interventions.

Resilience, in the form of social support and social competence, is at the heart of Habermas's theoretical project. His conceptualization of ethical action is based not on the relative basis of social construction but by possibly universal¹³ constraints of human interaction. The most competent people will be able to put themselves into the standpoint of others, no matter which culture she is part of. In fact, evidence will be sought from the existing empirical literature for mechanisms of effect that alienate the social sources of resilience, in this case, the source of resilience is peer support.

With one exception (P. K. Smith, L. Talamelli, et al., 2004), bullying research has been conducted using a medical frame and based on the assumption that bullying processes are necessarily pathological. Change to a positive and strengths-based perspective would not require the assumption that bullying, the experience of multiple humiliations and aggressive acts, is beneficial; but rather would make visible the many

¹³ Habermas tends to use the term "universal," yet is very clear that he is studying contemporary Western cultures. This writer uses the qualifier "possibly" before "universal" because a great deal of research would need to be undertaken to determine whether the social skills described by Habermas are truly universal or are constrained by Western ideas of human rights that have emerged post Enlightenment.

positive social experiences that bullying displaces, replaces, or prevents. In fact, a large part of the effects of bullying explained by the theory of communicative action and derived concepts involve the systematic alienation of the victim from sources of support and repair available within the non-coercive peer environment.

Deeper bonds, such as family relations and personal friendships, may survive bullying experiences, if only because they are not primarily based in school where the bullying occurs; weaker bonds, however, within the peer environment, may be instantly decimated depending on the type and severity of the bullying. Granoveter's (1973) notion of the importance of weak bonds, discussed above, will be more fully elaborated within the framework of Habermas's theory of communicative action.

Bullying and Play Deprivation

The concept of play, for this age group meaning forms of social free play, will figure prominently in this paper. Play and Habermas's key theoretical concept of "communicative action" share several features.

The term "play" was defined by Lever in 1978 as "a cooperative interaction that has no stated goal, no end point, and no winners (1978, p. 473); formal *games* in contrast, are competitive interactions, aimed at achieving a recognized goal" (Lever, 1978, p. 473). Later definitions echo Lever's and suggest that, at higher levels of socialization, play includes such behaviors as the rehearsal of adult roles and serves as a venue in which children can practice a wide set of social skills, including the ability to influence each other without resorting to coercion (Christie & Johnsen, 1987; Cole-Hamilton, Harrop, & Street, 2005; Frost & Jacobs, 1995; A.D. Pellegrini & Smith, 1998; Rubin, Fein, & Vandenberg, 1983; Rubin, Maioni, & Hornung, 1976; Spinrad et al., 2004).

The definitions of “play” and Habermas’s “communicative state” share similar features and may be essentially the same phenomenon¹⁴. Attempts to influence another person, as are found in play, are characterized by Habermas as “validity claims,” influencing others based on logic, norms, and relationship. Victimization puts an affected child into what Habermas would call an instrumental state; for some children, this may last only in the minutes they are being bullied, but for other children, the bullying may more substantially alienate them from social support and play.

The play behavior of victimized children is yet another important area of research only marginally featured in the bullying literature (Boulton, 1999; A.D. Pellegrini, Blatchford, Kato, & Baines, 2004). Prominent bullying researchers Pellegrini and Smith performed a meta-analysis of studies into the benefits to children of play and found that the only benefits of play that can be empirically demonstrated are physical strength and flexibility (A.D. Pellegrini & Smith, 1998). This lack of finding is likely due to the methodological difficulties of tracking change over time. This project makes the case that much can be learned from bullying research based on the fact that bully-involved children are deprived of play to a greater or lesser degree.

While play deprivation has been identified in the conceptual literature at the time of this writing, there has been no empirical study attempting to measure the effect of play deprivation. This writer’s project may shed some light into the effect of play deprivation by showing that some of the ill effects of victimization result from play deprivation by virtue of the theorized idea that victimized children experience less communicative social contexts which can be shown by demonstrating that the children play less.

¹⁴ A research protocol directly based on Habermas’s theory of communicative action would need to be implemented to determine whether and what kind of play is similar to communicative action.

Autonomy

The concept of autonomy has not figured in any theory of bullying or research. It is this writer's contention that restriction of autonomy is, as imbalance of power, a common feature of all bullying interactions. Threat and coercion are overtly physical but relational bullying, including status attacks, effectively limits the autonomy of the victimized child within the social world. Although autonomy is implicitly subsumed into Habermas's theory of communicative action, it was the cornerstone of his earlier idea of knowledge-constitutive interests which will be reviewed below.

Bertschinger and his colleagues present a relatively complex mathematical model of autonomy that assumes that an actor is operating in a complex social environment and needs to negotiate with that environment in order to exercise freedom of action (Bertschinger, Olbrich, Ay, & Jost, 2006). In other words, autonomous action does not mean taking action that is self-derived without consideration of the effect one will have within the social world. A successful interaction will not only leave the environment intact, but could, as Kondrat (1995) described it, be mutually emancipating.

Shapiro (1981, 2000) sees the restriction of autonomy as the essential component for the creation of many forms of psychopathology, personality disorders in particular. Yet another example of the interdisciplinary fragmentation Shapiro does not cite or appear to acknowledge Habermas's or any critical theorists' contribution to the climate of ideas from which a focus on autonomy clearly belongs. Shapiro shows how the obstruction of autonomy distorts character in rational ways that fit perfectly with and extend Habermas's ideas of cognitive distortion. This also meshes with Kokko's (2000) notion of cumulative continuity in that these experiences accrete over time and pervade

the individual's choice of social life. For example, Shapiro would predict a strong correlation between childhood bully involvement and adult sadistic and/or masochistic relationships as at least some bully-involved children replicate the oppressive social environment over time and spatial environment.

Where Shapiro shows the restriction of autonomy as essential to the formation of psychopathology it is a thesis of this project that restriction of autonomy also deprives children of curative and supportive experiences. This idea will be explored at length as it involves the interpretation and extension of theory of communicative action.

A child whose autonomy is globally affected by her victimization experiences is theorized to be more globally impaired. The existing literature will be plumbed for evidence, if only indirect evidence, for this assertion.

This Writer's Unpublished Research

Kogan and Chandan (2004), in an unpublished study involving extended observations, interviews, and data-mining of clinical files from a pilot violence prevention program in an elementary school, found data that both confirmed and challenged the conventional wisdom present in the bullying literature. The authors found that community violence was a factor in how one goes about reducing and preventing bullying. The cousins, sibling, friends, and even parents of victimized children would frequently directly intervene with the bully or his family, sometimes directly threatening violent retaliation. There appeared to be a code of conduct toward violence, although this researcher was unable to find an informant willing to discuss this frankly, that stigmatized the brutalization of weaker children. The study took place in an urban

community that, despite a rapidly decreasing crime and murder rate, still had many incidents of physical violence and threat.

Teaching children to tell teachers about bullying may not be an appropriate strategy in high violence communities. Informants came forward voluntarily in both research and non-research venues to express vehement opposition to one aspect of the violence prevention program being implemented in classrooms. Both youth and adults made it clear to our staff that teaching children to go to a teacher for help if they were being bullied or threatened was an unwise and potentially lethal strategy in their community that had a viable drug trade. They explained that they did not trust that the young children being taught to report bullying behavior to teachers would not do the same in the more dangerous community context such as the drug trade. Community members who have complained to police or had given evidence against drug dealers had been violently intimidated and even killed.

Evidence in a small number of victims of bullying confirmed the toxicity of categorical thinking (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000). One child who had been bullied extensively revealed her deeply-held belief that some unknown quality inherent in her nature was to blame for the bullying. Individual, classroom, and group interventions, as well as an arts-based recreational program, helped her find a unique identity and adopt a more flexible self-perception.

Gaps in the Bullying Literature

The foregoing review of the bullying literature suggests several gaps in the literature and directions for future research. Despite the primacy of power imbalance in the definition of bullying, no research has specifically focused on the power bases used by bullies. Rigby (2004) suggests that bullying can be understood as a socio-cultural

phenomenon; however, he does not suggest a specific social theory that might be applied to the phenomenon

Other ideas or paradigms do not rise to the level of an expansive social theory but may also elucidate the bullying phenomenon. For example, research into the idea of interactive and cumulative continuity (Kokko & Pulkkinen, 2000) could elucidate the processes of bully involvement: in particular, how children who enter school at risk for bullying involvement may be less likely to transcend their victim or bully role. Kokko's theory of cumulative continuity would predict that children involved in bullying, in whatever role, might repeat their experiences throughout childhood, staying with the same friends or friends who share the same tendency toward bully-involvement.

The bullying literature does not provide a comprehensive picture of the entry into and exit from the victim and bully roles. The literature does imply that some children with few social skills are at risk for bullying the moment they enter the school system. Although there is evidence that bullying is a stable phenomenon, it is also apparent that children enter and exit bullying at different times in their school careers. Future research may collect data on entry and reentry into victimization to determine the differences in context and constitution of symptomatic victims from those children who do not become symptomatic after being bullied. As touched on above, community violence has been largely neglected as an environmental variable that may affect the quality and quantity of bullying.

To effectively measure the effects of bullying, researchers should isolate the cohort of bully victimized children who were not poly-victimized and determine bullying effects in the absence of significant confounding variables.

Very little research has been done to determine any benefits or perceived benefits of bullying. No study directly or indirectly asked parents and teachers whether they supported bullying or accepted it as a normal part of childhood. Some parents, teachers,

and older siblings of children may well support bullying as a way for the children to gain a competitive advantage while other adults may value the submissiveness of victimized children. As described above, Nazi policy appeared to directly promote bullying as a way of preparing young people for adult roles of coercion. An historical study of pedagogy and children's literature may unearth other examples of techniques used to promote the social reproduction of coercive roles.

Only two studies in the literature investigate whether teachers themselves have a tendency to bully or scapegoat children (Omigbodun et al., 2008; S.W. Twemlow et al., 2006). It seems likely, given the fact that local factors often determine the prevalence of bullying, that the power tactics of teachers and school administrators could determine the presence of bullying. A large- scale ethnographic study examining leadership styles in high and low bullying schools could shed light on these local factors¹⁵.

Play is another neglected area of bullying research. It is likely that both bullies and their victims are deprived of social play given the isolating nature of the problem. While there is research to show that bully-involved children tend to be less successful socially, there has been no research specifically correlating bullying involvement and its effects on play behavior. Buhs and Ladd (2001) contend that children with compromised social systems and poor social skills lack the opportunity to play. Aside from rough and tumble play, which mimics bullying and aggression in a play context, bullying cannot be considered play. Children involved in bullying are not playing, at least while the bullying is taking place. It would be important to determine the degree to which bullying involvement deprives children of play during and after the bullying occurs. Play

¹⁵Such a research project would present some methodological challenges. In a host setting it would be challenging to collect data that has the potential to embarrass the host of that setting.

deprivation may, in fact, explain some part of the negative effects of bullying. If, as theorists predict, play helps children learn social skills and rehearse contemporaneous situations and adult roles (Cole-Hamilton, Harrop & Street, 2007; Frost & Jacobs, 1995), children deprived of play would have a serious impediment to successful adaptation. Research could determine whether bullying changes the quality or quantity of play activities.

To date, no research has been done to adapt critical theory to the study of bullying. The theory has largely been used in legal and political theory (Habermas, 1996); however, Habermas's theory of communicative action offers a full social theory that is intended to explain a full range of social actions and could as easily be applied to the life of the individual as to the life of a nation. In fact, Habermas himself often illustrates his ideas with mundane examples of interpersonal relations – his mechanic, or a person staying late at a party (1984) within his own lifeworld (in addition to giving examples from larger contexts). Play behavior resembles Habermas's description of communicative action as an environment in which meaning is made in the absence of specific goals. While variables may be used as stand-ins, it would be important to undertake empirical studies to determine the salience of such Habermasian concepts as illocutionary bonds and communicative processes of support and repair by directly operationalizing these concepts.

Theory-building has been identified by Morrison (1994) and Rigby (Rigby, 2003) as a serious gap in the bullying literature. Despite the lack of a theoretical foundation, school boards are mandated to intervene to end bullying. As Dubin (1978) makes clear,

an intervention is unlikely to be successful until a good theory is found to explain and predict the phenomenon to be treated.

In light of Dubin's observation, this writer's project will attempt to tackle this lack of theory building in the bullying literature by reviewing the current knowledge base and by applying Habermas's conceptual framework to see whether and to what degree his theory can explain all or part of the bullying phenomenon.

Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action

In this project, the German philosopher and critical theorist Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action will be tested as a conceptual framework with which to understand the effects of bullying. This section includes a brief summary of the aspects of Habermas's social theory that will be applied in this project. In the subsequent research design section, the theory will be adapted to the study of bullying and used to derive a conception of some of the mechanisms through which children are affected by bullying experiences. An in-depth analysis will be undertaken in that section which will include and interpret Habermas's own words.

While Habermas does not tend to use the terms "power" or "power imbalance," his project can be understood as an analysis of different forms of power as applied to the creation of just social action. Bullying will be conceptualized, according to Habermas's schema of social action, as instrumental action that limits the autonomy of the target (and the other children involved). Different types of bullying limit the children's autonomy in one or more domains of life, physical, emotional and social domains in particular. By contrast, consensual activities such as those that occur in free play fit the schema of

communicative action in which children are highly autonomous and influence each other in non-coercive ways.

As previously discussed, no research study has operationalized the concept of play deprivation; however, that victims of bullying and other bully-involved children have lower levels of social play can be deduced from studies that show children involved in bullying are more isolated socially: at least during the minutes when the bullying is occurring, the children involved are not “playing.” This deprivation of play may explain some of the continuing and cumulative effects of bullying in that the bully-involved children experience less communicative action (autonomous) and more instrumental action (coercive) than their peers. The children, through this lack of communicative action, therefore, may not be learning essential social skills negotiation, compromise and informal forms of positive leadership.

Habermas theorizes that communicative action is a realm of human interaction that consists of a myriad of often small acts of solidarity, consensus-making, and meaning creation. Bullies’ and victims’ limited access to this domain of interaction may explain a large part of the negative sequelae of bullying and other forms of power abuse. In light of the fact that there is no empirical literature showing the positive effects of communicative action, a systematic review of the bullying literature may be able to demonstrate the deleterious effects of the absence of communicative action. In addition to limiting the actual opportunity to interact in a consensual environment, bullying may also lead to “distortion of cognition.”

Habermas’s (1987) notion of the distortion of cognition corresponds with the ideas of Dodge and Frame (1982) in which bullies are often considered to be acting on a

hostile attribution of social cues due to an inaccurate internal representation of the social world. Distortion of cognition may explain some of the effects of bullying, not just the reasons for bullying, in that a child who internalizes a negative self-concept as the result of bullying will have distortions of self-concept, identity, mood, and have fewer opportunities to learn and practice social skills. Several studies show that such variables as self-esteem, identity, and self-beliefs mediate the effects of bullying and other forms of aggression (Burt, Obradovic, Long, & Masten, 2008; Schmidt & Bagwell, 2007). These mediating variables, then, can be examined to see if they are consistent or not with Habermas's theory.

The following section will clarify the research design and methods chosen for this project.

PART III TYPE OF RESEARCH DESIGN

Opening Statement

This dissertation is a systematic review of the research literature into the effects of school bullying published in the United States within a ten-year period, with the goals of developing a model of these effects and of testing German philosopher and critical theorist Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action with the real world social problem of school bullying. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses for theory building are relatively new techniques done in the fields of organizational development (Hassard, 1991; Lewis, 1999; Viswevaran & Ones, 1995; Yang, 2002), psychology (Cheung & Au, 2005), and, under the term "conceptual ontologies data mining" (Blagasklonny & Pardee, 2002), in the fields of information technology and biomedicine (Gottgtroy, Kasabov, & MacDonell, 2003). Dubin's (1978) schema of theory building is being used because it is designed to build theory from empirical research and practice.

In this section, the research design and methodology will be outlined as will the rationale for the design. The goals of the project and the feasibility will be briefly outlined. The systematic review technique will be described and related to the problem of bullying and to the process of testing and building a theory.

Current State of Knowledge

The research into the effects of bullying, as with most bullying research, has been conducted using different and, at times, incompatible definitions, measurements, and methodologies (Grills & Ollendick, 2002), also called "shared method variance" (Haynes & Hayes O'Brien, 2000). Both the dependent and independent variables in effects studies

have been measured with a variety of techniques. In consequence, the studies into the effects of bullying present a confusing picture of differing results. While there is a small number of theories consistently applied in the bullying research, these theories have tended to explain only the etiology of bullying involvement. No significant work has been done to create or adapt a theory to explain the effects of the bullying phenomenon.

Intervention in bullying in the absence of a clearly articulated theory underpinning it is unlikely to be successful simply because when a phenomenon is not adequately understood the practitioner does not know how to effectively intervene (Dubin, 1978; Kaplan, 1964; Van de Ven, 1989). In spite of this lack of theory, bullying intervention programs are proliferating in the US and elsewhere. There is no evidence clearly showing that any particular bullying intervention or prevention program is consistently effective, while some evidence shows that certain intervention programs actually increase bullying or help bullies hide their actions from adults (Dixon et al., 2004; Rigby, 2003).

Despite the now universally accepted definition of bullying, which incorporates the feature of power imbalance inherent in the bullying phenomenon, no research has been done to determine the similarities and differences between bullying and other forms of power. Nevertheless, bullying studies can be seen as a rich data for the study of the effects of power, particularly those studies which were conducted using the contemporary definition of bullying (which includes the feature of power imbalance). Among researchers into power and power relations, only Schmidt and Raven, reviewed above (1993; 1985), have looked at children's relationships to deepen the understanding of power.

Research Question

The essential question for this project, “What are the effects of bullying on the target children (victims¹⁶)?”, will be asked at several levels of conceptualization from the implicit or stated theory in the research through the component concepts, the variables measured, and the instruments and techniques used. Jurgen Habermas’s theory of communicative action will be used as a conceptual framework with which to understand all or part of these effects.

Goals

The goal of building knowledge within critical social work, as within critical theory, is to emancipate people from active oppression in the present and to promote the conditions under which they can fully participate in the lifeworld. The primary critical objective of this project is to develop a theoretical understanding of the effects of victimization in order to free children from the oppressive experience of being victimized by bullying and, possibly, other forms of victimization. A second goal is to empirically test the efficacy of Habermas’s theory of communicative action in reference to the study of bullying and of peer relationships.

It is this writer’s contention that the emancipatory goal of this project is identical to Jurgen Habermas’s goal of creating the conditions for a peaceful democratic society. Whereas Habermas applies his theory to nation building and the creation of constitutions, in this project, this writer looks at the conditions under which children can become free of oppression at a local level. This writer contends that children able to handle peer

¹⁶ For the research project, an attempt will be made to avoid using the terms “bully” and “victim” to refer to children as the categorization itself may be iatrogenic.

oppression effectively will grow into adults able to participate and contribute positively to the socially just constitutional state.

The review of US empirical studies will be used to create a typology of the effects of bullying on target children and to propose at least one mechanism by which children are affected by school bullying. The measures and definitions used in the research will be organized into typological categories in the interest of conceptual clarity, since, as noted above, definitions and measures used in bullying research vary widely. This writer intends that this project will make a contribution to the theoretical understanding of the ways that the bullying phenomenon and, perhaps, other forms of power abuse, affect the target child.

Systematic Review for Theory Testing and Building

This project will attempt to build a theory by using data from research studies published in the US within a ten-year period. A systematic review--a targeted review of a set of studies (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006)--will be conducted on research studies into the effects of bullying to build a model that can explain the mechanisms of effect. As Lehnert (2007) suggests, this review will organize the array of variables already studied in the bullying literature to build a model of the effects of bullying.

McGuire (1997) asserts that reorganizing an existing body of literature can itself be a method of original discovery by bringing together complementary studies and reconciling studies with conflicting outcomes. In the case of the bullying literature, this will entail clarifying the concepts used in the research studies that were conducted using different methodologies and different definitions to determine whether insight can be gained about the mechanisms of effect through aggregating these results.

Only US studies are being selected for this review for several reasons. The primary reason is that US schools do not yet have significant anti-bullying initiatives is a confounding variable that makes it difficult to compare Scandinavian, European, and Commonwealth study result. US children, in the absence of such programs, are likely to experience the aftereffects of bullying more strongly than their European counterparts as the US children are much less likely to have access to informal and professional sources of support. The research of Wolke and colleagues (Wolke et al., 2000) indicates that victimized children living in places where there is a stigma against bullying and services are less symptomatic than children living in places where bullying is largely ignored (i.e., the US): the results of their cross-national study show that children in countries where there is a great deal of service and support in the schools for bullied children.

Due and colleagues (2005) compared the symptoms of children identified as victims of bullies from 28 nations and found that the victims in the US and Israel ranked significantly higher in symptom rates and severity than those in the European countries with which they were compared. While it would be hard to determine all the factors that explain this sharp difference, the US and Israel share two features that constitute confounding variables: (1) both countries had significant wars during the period in which most of the studies were conducted and published (US—Iraq and Afghanistan; Israel—Lebanon and Palestine); and (2) both countries occupied other countries during this period, which has raised human rights' and other concerns. The US engaged in systematic methods of torture in Iraq (Bybee, 2002) amid a media climate that was, in some cases, tolerant of torture and other oppressive tactics carried out by government officials, and Israel has used its military to attack terrorists (or freedom fighters using

terror tactics depending on one's frame of reference on the Middle East) in the West Bank and Gaza, harming civilians in the process.

Another reason for limiting this review to US studies is that the term "bullying" may be understood differently across cultures. Definitions of bullying vary among languages and cultures (P. K. Smith & Brain, 2000; P. K. Smith, Cowie, Olafsson, & Liefoghe, 2002). Despite regional linguistic differences, most US children will understand the term in the same way, while speakers of other languages understand connotations that differ from American English usage.

Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses

Meta-analyses are often paired with systematic reviews. The research studies used in meta-analyses need to measure the same phenomenon, using the same or similar techniques. Various meta-analytic techniques are often used to determine the most effective technique or clinical procedure in several outcome studies. Several statistical techniques can be applied depending on the nature of the data and the question being asked: the cumulative effect size can be generated; the homogeneity of the collected results can be determined; compatibility with a theory or model can be measured using complex factor analysis and path analysis techniques both separately and together in the form of structural equation modeling. The advantage of meta-analysis where there is homogeneity of method is that the use of several studies can dramatically increase the sample size and, therefore, increase the power of the statistical relationship.

A statistical meta-analysis is not feasible for this project because of the tremendous heterogeneity among the variables in the selected studies. All of this project's selected studies report data on the correlation between victimization and at least one of its hypothesized effects but very few use the same instrument or methods with a comparable sample. In addition to the difference in method used to determine the presence of victimization, different studies among those selected sought to determine the presence of bullying during different time periods. Some asked only if the bullying was happening contemporaneously, while others asked about differing retroactive periods. Contemporaneous samples would be more likely to have accurate measures of the immediate effects of bullying but may miss some of the longer term effects by

eliminating escaped victims, children who were no longer being victimized and who may be asymptomatic.

The most basic technique of presenting data is the “vote-counting” technique which simply tabulates and compares the relative effect sizes on their face value without using a statistical technique to determine aggregated effects sizes. This review will use this vote-counting technique to examine the results on their face value. This method allows for simple, descriptive techniques. The range, significance, and direction of the study results for each variable will be presented in table form, and these scores will be averaged. Where feasible, averages will be generated to allow a comparison between age groups. The method will be more fully elaborated in the data analysis section below.

Vote counting does not allow the researcher to weight effect sizes according to the number of subjects used or the type and acuity of the instrument. More advanced techniques will have to wait for a more homogeneous set of studies to be undertaken.

Lipsey and Wilson (2001) coined a term for the variation in context and method among different studies purporting to measure the same variables: “the apples and oranges effect.” This project by aggregating and analyzing the various measures and concepts in the disparate studies, intends to bring some clarity to the apple and orange effect of the results of the studies. The writer’s main method for bringing about this clarity is the use of constructed typologies discussed in the next section.

Constructed Typologies

A systematic review can be used to determine the state of knowledge and to begin the process of building or improving on an existing theory. This is achieved by clarifying

and rethinking the variables used in various studies, in this case, to develop a model to begin building an understanding of how bullying affects the target.

The call for conceptual clarity is consistent with the evolution of the social sciences, as succeeding generations of researchers used different concepts and measures to describe and explain the same social action in different contexts (and used sometimes used the same concept to describe different phenomena). Lazarsfeld (1937) credits Hempel and Oppenheim (cited in Lazarsfeld, 1937) with describing and codifying the ways social scientists borrowed techniques from the hard sciences by developing “types” which Lazarsfeld describes as “special compounds of attributes” (Lazarsfeld, 1937, p. 121), or the organization of numerous ideas or concepts according to a shared feature. Lazarsfeld (Lazarsfeld & Henry, 1968; Lazarsfeld & Rosenberg, 1955) and McKinney (1966) adapt classification methodologies from the hard sciences through the use of “typologies” that reduce complex groups of concepts to more manageable dimensions.

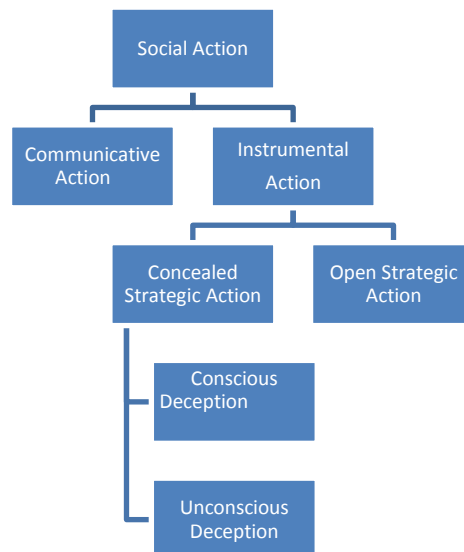
The use of powerful computers has extended this process by freeing conceptual clarity from the constraints of human intelligibility in the development of typologies. Conceptual ontologies data-mining allows computers to compare data across dimensions of human action, including numbers of factors beyond the capacity of most human beings to manipulate (Blagasklonny & Pardee, 2002; Gottgroy et al., 2003; Gruber, 1993); these conceptual connections are then made intelligible to humans through concept mapping (Trochim, 1989).¹⁷ This project does not have data sources large enough to require sophisticated data- processing techniques, but the process of building a theory is the same. Given the current public interest in the topic of bullying and the availability of

¹⁷ Conceptual ontologies data mining is beyond the scope of this project due to the limited scope of available data; however, with web technology, the available data could rise exponentially in the near future.

“crowd sourcing technology”-- the use of the Internet to gather large amounts of data very quickly--it is possible that this and other projects like it could be the beginning of a much larger process of data gathering and theory building on bullying.

This project will be limited to the creation of explanatory and descriptive typologies. This writer’s rationale for choosing Habermas’s theory of communicative action as the conceptual framework for the project is based largely on Habermas’s typology of instrumental action which will be shown below in Figure 2. As will be discussed, the typology of strategic action, a type of instrumental action, corresponds to the types of indirect bullying that involves the manipulation of the social environment that have emerged from over 30 years of research. Briefly, Habermas proposes a set of categories of instrumental action, including direct action and strategic action, in which others are recruited to elicit an action: this is consistent with the ways that bullies victimize their targets.

Figure 2: Habermas’s Typology of Social Action
(adapted from Habermas, 1971)



The question in this project is whether Habermas's theory of communicative action or a derived theory can also provide an explanatory typology--a typology of the concepts and relationships between concepts that explain a phenomenon (Lazarsfeld & Henry, 1968). To that end, the concepts and measures used in existing bullying studies will be catalogued and abstracted into typologies. The creation of a typology involves the compression of large amounts of data into a smaller set of concepts. These typologies will be compared with Habermas's theory of communicative action. This will entail organizing the many variables studied in the disparate studies into logical categories.

Theory Building and Testing

Theory building and testing is largely the work of the imagination (McGuire, 1997; Weick, 1989), often the imaginations of multiple contributors (Kaplan, 1964) working directly or indirectly on the same phenomenon. According to Kaplan, theory formation:

stands for the symbolic dimension of experience, as opposed to the apprehension of brute fact. The content of our experience is not a succession of mere happenings, but a sequence of more or less meaningful events, meaningful both in themselves and in the patterns of their occurrence...the device for interpreting, criticizing and unifying established laws, modifying them to fit data unanticipated in their formulation, and guiding the enterprise of discovering new and more powerful generalizations (Kaplan, 1964, pp. 294-295).

Theory building is an attempt to explain processes that are not evident or necessarily visible (Brante, 2001). These processes may be "latent variables", either unseen or unnoticed, whose relationships are laws or rules that can explain and predict outcomes and relationships among "manifest," or observable, variables. Where the relationships among variables and properties cannot be perceived, the researcher must rely on the creative imagination, albeit based on real world experience. As Dubin (1978)

states, all theory begins with our understanding of the world, whether this takes the form of remembered experience (Habermas, 1987) or extended observation with detailed notes and recordings of events and conversation. For the research into bullying, processes exist at different levels of observability.

Dubin (1978) suggests that there is a dynamic process that occurs among theory, lived experience (for which he uses the German term *verstehen*, or understanding of human activity), and empirical research. Each one informs and enriches the other. He sees no discontinuity or inconsistency among qualitative paradigms, conceptual processes, and empirical research. He states that there are three results possible in the testing of a theory or model: 1) the theory and empirical results are identical; 2) the theory is not sufficient to explain all the results; and 3) the results go beyond the boundaries of the theory. In this case, the empirical literature on the effects of bullying will be compared to predicted results based on the research.

Theory itself can bring phenomena into human consciousness. Research and theory serve to make seemingly obscure processes visible. Latent, theorized, variables are often considered to be invisible, but in fact, the visibility of theorized variables is a relative phenomenon (Price, 2007) as are the ways that theory can make social processes visible. Marx and Freud and their colleagues and, later Einstein created revolutions in thought by theorizing about invisible processes in the social world and the physical universe, respectively. For example, Einstein rethought the nature of light asking himself what if light were neither a particle nor a wave but instead had qualities of both. This was a theoretical idea up until 1919 when observers found that light from a distant star passing the sun during an eclipse was bent by the sun's mass. Not only did the light

curve, it curved exactly as Einstein's theory predicted. Light clearly had a small amount of mass. Subatomic physics experimentally proves the existence of elementary particles by measuring their collision with measurable particles.

In the case of bullying, despite the calibration of bullies which maintains their activities *sub rosa* (Gumpel, 2000), adults also substantially ignored the bullying, perhaps assuming that it was a rite of passage that could not be stopped. One can say that subjective psychodynamic processes, such as Sigmund Freud's ideas of the subconscious process, are invisible; yet Rensis Likert (1932) developed a simple method of asking people to rate their subjective process on a numeric scale: the Likert Scale makes subjective processes visible by simply asking the individual to rank their subjective experience. In an example from the bullying literature, the cognitive effects of bullying occur within the mind of the child and are accessible only to the degree that the child is developmentally able to express herself; however, any lessening of social play is visible to the researcher who can observe and record the child's and others' actions.

Time is an essential element of theory. Victimization can have both immediate and long-term effects. The studies selected for this review measure a large number of effects which may or may not have a temporal relationship with each other. It is likely that a logical model will emerge from this review showing how being victimized affects a child over time. It is hoped that such a model will be the first step in answering Finkelhor's (1995) call to enrich our understanding of how victimization affects the longer term development of a child.

Components of the Research

Though the methods adapted for this research are varied and drawn from different sources, they have been chosen for their capacity to answer a series of questions that will give a comprehensive picture of the present state of knowledge in the field of bullying and how that knowledge relates to Habermas's theory of communicative action. The research will involve two stages: a systematic review of selected existing studies, and the testing and building of a theory.

Stage 1: Systematic Review of Selected Existing Studies

This stage of the research will analyze selected existing studies to create a typology and model(s) of the effects of bullying. Conceptual clarity will be sought in order to reconcile or differentiate data gathered using different definitions and methods to create a comprehensive understanding of the present state of knowledge.

The questions guiding Stage 1 are:

- What are the concepts being applied to the effects of bullying?
- How are the variables that comprise the concepts being measured?
- What are the different effects of bullying, the results in terms of effect size?
- How can the many disparate variables be organized into typologies?
- Does the aggregated literature suggest a model or models of the mechanism of effect?

Stage 2: Theory Testing and Building

The second stage of the research will relate the concepts and research results to Habermas's theory of communicative action and derived concepts and constructs. This will take place in the analysis section of the project.

The questions guiding Stage 2 are:

- What model can be established based on Habermas's theory?
- Do the concepts in the studies relate to those in Habermas's theory?
- Are there relevant concepts that are not explored in the studies?

- Can the results of existing studies be compared with a conceptual model based on Habermas's theory?
- Are there data that disconfirm Habermas's theory?
- Are there data that suggest an alternative model to Habermas's?
- Are there data that deepen or extend Habermas's theory?

Examples of Studies Using Similar Methods

Hawker and Boulton's (2000) review of 20 years of studies into the adjustment effects of victimization very much inspired this project. The overall method of this project is similar in several key ways. Like the Hawker and Boulton review, this project converts study results to a common metric; also like this project the authors used the vote-counting method¹⁸, presenting the results and a group mean for each category that was not weighted according to the sample size. Hawker and Boulton limited their descriptive analysis to concurrent studies and grouped their selected studies according to the type of bullying definition used. Hawker and Boulton's contribution was a milestone as it helped to clarify and summarize the disparate definitions that had been used in early bullying research.

Kim and Leventhal (2008) performed a systematic review of the research studies that looked at bullying and the single effect of suicidal ideation and behavior. For the same methodological reasons as are used in this project, the authors felt that a full meta-analysis was not feasible as the dependent and independent variables were measured in very different ways. This is termed high "method variance".

The theory-building aspect of this project has close parallels to the work of Bai Yin Yang (2002) and Lewis and Grimes (1999) who proposes the use of meta-analysis as

¹⁸ Hawker and Boulton use the term meta-analysis in their study. As in this study the studies available to Hawker and Boulton lacked homogeneity. Hawker and Boulton can be said to have provided a set of statistics *describing* the body of study results including their ranges and averages.

a theory-building tool. Yang applies his technique to the literature on organizational development. Lewis and Grimes's (1999) meta-analysis of organizational literature shows the literature in that field is rich in theory. A pilot study reviewing the bullying literature in preparation for this project showed that the bullying literature is very thin on theory. Where Yang and Lewis and Grimes were building on a rich tradition of theorizing, this project is taking place at the preliminary stages of theory building, identifying potential latent constructs and processes within the empirical literature and comparing them with Habermas's theory of communicative action.

The theory analysis aspect of this project will be modeled upon three studies: Margolin and Goldis (2000), Painter and colleagues (2008), and Abramovitz (1981). Margolin and Goldis's (2000) systematic review of the literature on the effects of community violence on children resembles this project in that it surveys a range of studies that show a range of effects (although not nearly as rich a source of data as the bullying literature provides). The authors, however, do not include any theory in their review. Painter and colleagues (2008) surveyed the theories used in a selected review of empirical research articles into behavioral health, the field that promotes a healthy lifestyle. They found that less than 5% of researchers clearly articulated any theory in portraying their research. This project will similarly survey the selected studies for the direct use of theory, but will also attempt to detect latent theories at play.

Abramovitz (1981) studied Progressive Era documents to determine the influence business played on the political processes and alliances that supported or thwarted worker's compensation and health care reform in the US. She reviewed literature from the conceptual frameworks of three dominant socio-political theories. Similarly, this

project will survey the (little) theory that exists and propose a particular theoretical frame. However, the studies in this project are not homogeneous, and only one theory, not three, will be used for the conceptual framework. The homogeneity of the documents in Abramovitz's study lent themselves to a more systematic approach in the review since the concepts and results were more able to be organized into tabular form.

A few studies indirectly parallel this project by using existing data sources to build a theory and knowledge in general. Hripcsak, et al. (retrieved September 2007) examined over 45,000 paper medical files in order to create a protocol for automated error detection and error prevention that could search medical files stored on computer databases or in data warehouses. Sequences and patterns of events that led up to a medical error were drawn from case files, and the patterns were then translated into searchable terms. The intention was to create an automatic search mechanism that could identify variables, sequences, and constellations of variables that indicate a risk of medical error.

Another project that marries case file data mining and automated searches of databases is the domestic surveillance campaign carried out by the US National Security Agency. While the project is secret, evading even Congressional oversight¹⁹, much of the technology and methodology used is in the public domain (Department of Defense, 2005; Arkin, 2007). The data-mining aspect of the domestic surveillance project does not actually monitor the verbal content of telecommunications, but rather searches enormous electronic databases for patterns that resemble the patterns of communications mined from FBI and CIA files. These patterns may include a mapping of the communication

¹⁹ This section was written during the second term of US President George W. Bush, whose administration authorized domestic surveillance.

that known-terrorist plotters used to coordinate past failed or completed attacks (Bulletin of Military Operations Research, 2005), as well as patterns characteristic of suicide bombers preparing to die.

Keshvala (2008), in a dissertation that comes closest in method to this writer's project, tests social capital theory using secondary data available through the Education Longitudinal Study (ELS) which gathers a wide range of educational data from all US schools. Keshvala begins with a theoretical model and tests to see how well the theory can explain the existing data. Keshvala uses structural equation modeling to build a theory about the effect of social capital on children's academic success. This project will limit the theoretical analysis and an examination of the face value of the effect sizes through factor or cluster analysis.

Theory of Communicative Action

In this project, Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action will be tested as a conceptual framework with which to understand the effects and etiology of bullying. While Habermas does not use the terms "power" or "power imbalance," his whole project can be understood as an analysis of different forms of power as applied to creating social action. Bullying will be conceptualized according to this schema of social action. Within the schema, bullying can be viewed as instrumental action that limits the autonomy of the target (and the other children involved). Consensual activities such as those that occur in free play, by contrast, fit the schema of communicative action i.e., the action of involved individuals is highly autonomous. Different types of bullying limit autonomy in one or more domains of life.

No study has operationalized the concept of play deprivation; however, the fact that bullied children have lower levels of play can be extrapolated from studies that show children involved in bullying are more isolated socially and less active: at least while the bullying itself is occurring the children involved are not playing. This deprivation of play may explain some of the continuing and cumulative effects of bullying in that the children experience less communicative action and more instrumental action. They may, therefore, not be learning essential social skills that could enrich their lives.

Habermas theorizes that communicative action is a realm of human interaction that consists of a myriad of, often small, acts of solidarity, consensus-making, and meaning creation. Limiting access to this domain of interaction may explain a large part of the negative sequelae of bullying and other forms of victimization. In light of the fact that there is no empirical literature showing the positive effects of communicative action a systematic review of the bullying literature may be able to show the deleterious effects of its absence. In addition to limiting the actual opportunity to interact in a consensual environment bullying may also lead to distortions of cognition.

As was discussed above, Habermas's (1987) idea of the distortion of cognition corresponds with Dodge and Frame's (1982) idea of cognitive distortion within the internal representation of the social world. Distortion of cognition might explain some of the effects of bullying by adversely affecting self-concepts, identity, mood and the opportunity to learn and practice social skills. Several studies show that such variables as self-esteem, identity and self-beliefs mediate the effects of bullying and other forms of aggression (Burt et al., 2008; Schmidt & Bagwell, 2007). These mediating variables,

then, can be examined to see if they are consistent with Habermas's theory. That theory will be more fully described in the following section.

PART IV ELABORATION OF THE THEORY OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTION

In this section, Habermas's theory of communicative action will be set into its historical and intellectual context, and will be fully elaborated and applied to the problem of bullying.

The term "critical theory" refers to a diverse body of social and political thought that shares common interests; an interest in crossing intellectual and research disciplines, and an interest in assuring that social science acts to emancipate rather than oppress people; and, in some cases, a common history (How, 2003).

Critical theory began in the 1920s in Frankfurt, Germany, at the Institute for Social Research, "the Frankfurt School," as the proponents of critical theory inside and out of the institute came to be known. The Frankfurt School was funded by private capital to encourage Marxist scholarship and to provide a venue for Marxist intellectuals who had been denied a place in mainstream academia (Jay, 1973). The Frankfurt School is associated with the University of Frankfurt which provides a professor to act as the institute director and was itself funded by the City of Frankfurt so it could exist outside of the conservative and, at the time, anti-Semitic, state university system (von Friedeburg, 2007).

In the years after the Russian Revolution, Germany lost its position as the home of Marxist scholarship to the Soviet Union, although the political forces within the Soviet Communist party tended to suppress innovation within Marxism as well as criticism of the Soviet state. The Frankfurt School provided an opportunity for social scientists to explore and expand Marxist theory (Jay, 1973) in a way that could not be done within the Soviet Union. Another rationale for the creation of the Institute was to overcome the

fragmentation of intellectual disciplines into separate and mutually exclusive enclaves: the Frankfurt School sought to unify philosophy, political economy, social psychology, psychoanalysis, and aesthetics (Horkheimer, 2003).

The evolution of critical theory cannot be explained without discussing the context of its time: the Frankfurt School began at the same time as the National Socialists, or Nazis, were organizing politically in Germany (Ritzer & Smart, 2001). Many of the Institute's members were Jewish and, despite the fact that it was still hard for a Jewish academic to rise within the German university system and that Jews were often denied public service positions, the Frankfurt School members felt that the moderately socialist Weimar Republic in power at the time of the inception of the Institute was proof that German anti-Semitism was coming to an end (Jay, 1973). Jay points out that the Jewish Institute members had more experience of anti-Semitism, in the form of social exclusion, while in exile in the US than they did in Weimar Germany.

Though the faculty of the Franklin School perceived that German anti-Semitism was waning, the Nazi party, well before it took power in the early 1930s, had already begun using systematic acts of terror against German-Jewish citizens and others they identified as political opponents and potential political opponents; trade union leaders, for example, were being beaten and murdered (Office of United States Chief of Counsel, 1946), Jewish academics were losing their positions, initially through a campaign of anti-Semitism and, after the Nazis gained power, through the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 which officially revoked the citizenship and civil rights of Jews and, subsequently, other groups (Office of United States Chief of Counsel, 1946).

In early 1933, after Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany as part of a supposed coalition government, German gay, lesbian, and bisexual people began to be confined in concentration camps, as were non-Jews convicted of the “crime” of having sexual relations with Jews. These concentration camp inmates were routinely sterilized, castrated, and killed (Kaplan, 1961). People with developmental disabilities were sterilized as well, and, as the system of extermination camps developed, killed (United States Office of Chief Counsel, 1946).

After the Nazi takeover of Germany in 1933, the early critical theorists, many of whom were Jewish and all of whom were progressive and committed to social justice, had either personal experience of Nazi repression or had family and friends directly affected. Most of the Frankfurt School faculty members emigrated from Germany to the US during the Nazi period, although Walter Benjamin, a critical theorist with a wide-ranging set of interests, took his own life in 1941 in Spain while trying to immigrate to the US. The Frankfurt School itself went into exile in 1933, initially to Geneva, Switzerland, and then to New York, where it continued to be very much concerned with the political and social calamity of the Nazi years.

The experience of state repression continued to be the central focus and impetus for critical theorists (Frankfurt School members and others) in the postwar period. The Nuremberg trials in 1945 and 1946, conducted to adjudicate war crimes after the end of hostilities, thoroughly documented the techniques used by the Nazis to gain and maintain power, and exposed the extent of Nazi crimes and the bureaucratic nature of their carefully planned campaign of terror, torture, and genocide (United States Office of Chief

of Counsel, 1946). Individual horror stories of concentration camp survivors continued to emerge through the 1950s and '60s (Yitzhak, 1987).

Jurgen Habermas, a second generation Frankfurt School member, whose theory of communicative action will be elaborated below, had regrettably himself been a member of the Hitler Youth and briefly served as a child soldier on the Western defenses at the end of the war (Habermas, 1992). Habermas specifically dates his political awakening to the immediate postwar period when he listened to the Nuremberg trials on the radio and observed the reactions of denial and minimization among the adults in his environment (Habermas, 1992).

Critical theorists Arendt (2006) and Adorno (1982) have addressed fascism explicitly in their research into authoritarian tendencies, while Horkheimer (2003) and Habermas (Borradori, 2003; Habermas, 1979, 1996) struggle with the processes of creating an ethical democratic society with mechanisms of recognition able to preclude the kinds of state terror they had experienced in Nazi Germany.

Early critical theorists were generally opposed to positivist social science, preferring speculative theorizing and hermeneutic research (How, 2003). The reasons for this tendency will be explored in the following section.

Empirical Research and Critical Theory

In the 1930s, certain Nazi academics had developed systems to identify “non-Aryan” traits based on the “science” of eugenics, the study of animal husbandry applied to human beings (Hawkins, 1997). Jewish and other peoples were classified by these academics and the state as “sub-humans” and were systematically tortured and murdered as a “solution” to a perceived social problem, that Germany’s economic and social ills

were caused by the presence of Jewish and other “non-Aryan” influences. Critical theorists shied away from empirical research for fear of falling into any classification pitfalls that would reify their research subjects and cause similar harm.

After moving to the US, however, the Frankfurt School absorbed the American bias in favor of empirical research and produced much original research using survey techniques (Adorno et al., 1982; Jay, 1973). Nevertheless, one of the consequences of the critical theorists’ anti-empirical stance is the enduring scarcity of empirical research testing some of the basic assumptions of critical theory, including Habermas’s theory of communicative action (Brunkhorst, 2003; 2005 personal communication).

Horkheimer (2003) proposes an intersubjective research paradigm for critical theory in order to ensure that social science plays no role in oppression. Intersubjectivity assumes an equality of position among human beings who work together to create a world of meaning. The idea of emancipation has been integrated into the definition of critical theory in that it is constrained to reflect on the social world in ways that dissolve “distorted forms of communication” (Brunkhorst, 2004, p. 151). Critical theory, then, in addition to providing an explanation of the social world and a basis for predicting social action, contains a mandate to promote social justice: in this way it shares a mandate with social work.

Despite critical theory’s anti-empirical bias, Brunkhorst, a student of Habermas and a prominent critical theorist, suggests that empirical research can remain consistent with critical theory’s emancipatory mandate even when it undertakes traditional empirical tasks such as verifying the validity of concepts and testing the salience of a theory in experimental and quantitative studies (2003; personal communication, 2005). Brunkhorst

attempts to dissolve what he sees as an unnecessary boundary between the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, by asserting that qualitative research is essentially a process of categorizing social phenomenon at an order at least once removed from traditional quantitative research. Habermas himself laments that his ideas have not been tested in empirical settings (White, 1995).

Another objective of critical theory is to break down the barriers between academic disciplines (Horkheimer, 1982). The central objective of critical theory is the reordering of the social sciences into a unified project that promotes emancipation by making visible and understandable the life experiences that obstruct personal freedoms and reveal the possibility of new social arrangements (How, 2003).

Emancipation/Autonomy

The fascist and anti-Semitic agenda of the Nazi regime was predicated on the classification of human beings into discrete groups have certain character traits. The process of objectifying human beings and human activity, called “reification” (Lukacs, 1971), is seen as a precursory mental process to oppression (Heath, 2001), both within the social world and the social sciences. Marcuse (1974) defines reification as the perception of human beings and their relationships as having the quality of an object or a thing. The perception of a human being as a *thing*, or an *other*, who is not part of a valued social system, allows an oppressor to mistreat a fellow human being without a corresponding lowering of self-esteem. The typification--the idea that a certain term is typical of a group-- of human beings as “vermin” is a propaganda technique that was used to condone and exhort genocide in Nazi Germany (Goldhagen, 1996) and more recently in Rwanda (Gourevitch, 1999).

Gelman and Heyman (1999), seemingly independently from the critical theorists²⁰, describe a phenomenon they call “essentialism,” or categorical thinking: the process by which people believe that certain attributes are “rooted in the nature of” (Gelman, 2003, p.7), or an essential part of, the person, and that these essences explain observable behavior. Essentialism has been proposed as an explanation of childhood aggression. Internalized essentialist beliefs may also explain some of the ill effects of bullying: the victim may believe that his role as a victim and the reasons that he was chosen as a victim are essential to him and will not change over time. (As has been pointed out previously, categorical or essentialist thinking may also be a cognitive process involved in positive experiences, such as commitment and language development.)

Critical theory was an attempt to develop a social theory that avoided the pitfalls inherent in such categorizations. Categorization appears to be a key to the generation of oppressive processes and may, when internalized, be a key to the self-oppression that occurs when people internalize colonialist and other oppressive thought forms.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term “emancipation” as “setting free from social and political restrictions” (2002). Max Horkheimer, a key critical theorist, defines “emancipation” as the liberation of all human beings “from the circumstances that enslave them” (Horkheimer, 1982) by a process of identifying and actively overcoming limitation to human freedom (Bohman, 2005).

Habermas uses the term “autonomy” in place of “emancipation” to avoid the idea that an interest in emancipation necessarily follows as a result of its binary opposite,

²⁰ The bibliographies of Gelman’s book and articles show no reference to critical theorists or Lukacs.

oppression (2003); autonomy, Habermas argues, is a fundamental human interest in itself. How (2003) defines autonomy as orienting oneself towards determining one's own life, which is identical to the social work value of "self-determination" (Freedberg, 1989; McDermott, 1975).

The conception of autonomy will figure strongly in this writer's interpretation of bullying using Habermas's theory of communicative action, in that bullying can be considered part of a group of low or no autonomy social situations which, according to the theory as we have adapted it, will have specific sequelae for the victim, as well as for other bully-involved children. This writer's project will examine the bullying literature for the insight it offers into such components if Habermas's critical theory.

In the next section the terms of "postmodernism" and "post-structuralism" will be discussed.

Postmodernism and Post-structuralism

"Postmodernism" is the term used to denote a stage of history in which the modernist promise of reason and science's ability to ensure human freedoms no longer holds sway (Ritzer, 2002). In the 1900s, The Modernist or Enlightenment philosophy, in which reason was to elucidate universal truths (Rasmussen, 2003) was replaced by the idea that power relations, existing as structures within society capable of oppression, were active in direct and indirect ways, guiding the course of science to the exclusion of the interests of oppressed minorities or non-dominant groups. Structural social work, which extends the ecological model to include power structures in the social world that hinder or promote adjustment by different social groups, is an example of a postmodern approach. Moreau (1990) attributes power to an unspecified group of the "rich and

powerful.” Structural social work can be seen as reductionist, analyzing a complex phenomenon as if it were simple (Oxford English Dictionary, 2002). Post-structuralism deepens the understanding of power dynamics.

The family of post-structural theories was highly influenced by the techniques of textual analysis, hermeneutics, in particular, through which the discourses of power could be understood in the lacunae, the gaps or missing portions, of text (Ritzer, 2000).

Through the work of Derrida specifically, the main character and plot lines of literature can be seen as guided by the dominant ideology of the time which privileges some characters and issues while rendering others invisible. By focusing off the center of the text, called “decentering,” one can consider the invisible or less visible characters. For example, a decentering approach to the book *Gone With the Wind* might move the focus onto the lives of the enslaved peoples depicted as minor characters in the original novel. Deconstruction, another technique of post-structural literary analysis, is a process of analyzing text for logical pitfalls, contradictions, and assumptions that may not be part of the conscious writing process but are inherent in the dominant ideology of the writer in his social context (Borradori, 2003).

Employing these literary techniques one considers that interwoven narratives also construct the social world through discourse. Within US mass culture, the narratives of the dominant culture are frequently privileged at the expense of the narratives of minority and non-dominant groups. For example, the representation of community as a positive force is almost totally absent in mainstream depictions of African-American life in the popular US media.

Rather than monolithic structures understood as conspiratorial, class-based cabals, post-structuralism sees power as operating in people's daily lives as "multiple forms of constraint" (Foucault, 1980). Habermas attempts to elucidate the conditions and interests that create the social world. Through the method he calls "universal pragmatics" he looks for the social processes and competencies that any social group uses to create meaning.

Habermas is not always considered to be a poststructuralist because of his focus on building theory and his belief in the power of reason; he is, however, most directly post-structural in that he builds on the structuralist theory of Parsons (Habermas, 1987). Habermas's theory derives from the solution he proposes to the theoretical difficulties of reconciling the actions of an individual actor with the action of the "structure," or organization of individuals into institutions and collectives. Habermas, as will be discussed in detail, proposes that structures or systems operate according to a different set of rules from the world as it is lived, the lifeworld.

Critical Theory and Social Work

Despite the stated goal of critical theorists to integrate ideas from all the social sciences, the profession of social work and its literature are not visible within the body of critical theory. While social, developmental, and clinical psychology frequently inform the work of critical theorists, as does the work of linguists, philosophers, and sociologists, the social work profession is not presented or discussed by the major theorists writing in or translated into English²¹. It is ironic that a body of work and theory that is predicated on discovering and promoting invisible narratives has entirely ignored the narratives from

²¹ This writer's thorough reading of critical theorists published in English and several theorists published in French shows no references to social work theory or research.

social work history as the social work skill set is uniquely poised to actualize the mandate of critical theory to intervene to prevent and stop injustice.

Social work, among all the applied social sciences, has the practical skill base with which to engage individuals, groups, and communities in reflection on the social world. If social work has been invisible to critical theory, critical theory has become visible to social work, particularly social workers in Canada, Australia, and Great Britain who are embracing the tenets of critical theory and relating it to the profession. Within the social work profession, Habermas's theory of communicative action has been applied to the roles and ideologies underlying the child welfare system (Blaug, 1995), as a way to promote perspective-taking and diversity in social work education (Healy, 2001) and as a tool of policy analysis (Reading, 1998). The theory, however, has not yet been applied to children's peer interaction itself or the specific problem of bullying.

The fact that Habermas's theory has not been applied to child and family research is surprising in light of the fact that Habermas himself stated over 30 years ago that: "communicative action is the medium of socialization through which the influences of familial environments are filtered and transmitted to the personality system (1974, p. 132)".

Habermas's Critical Theory

In this section, both Habermas's early and later work will be described and applied to the problem of bullying. This description will begin with a discussion about an early theory of Habermas's called "knowledge-constitutive interests." Although Habermas abandoned this project, many of its features remain extant within the instrumental aspects of the theory of communicative action. Habermas's technique of

“universal pragmatics” will then be more fully described, and the final sections will elaborate the theory of communicative action and synthesize the aspects of the theory that will be applied to the problem of bullying.

Knowledge-Constitutive Interests

An important component of contemporary critical theory is Habermas’s construct of “knowledge-constitutive interests” (Habermas, 1971; Kondrat, 1995). In his discussion of knowledge-constitutive interests, Habermas, assumed a rational basis for human behavior, including conscious and less conscious processes, and suggested a direct link between cognitive structures controlling behaviors and social skills, which he called “interactive competencies.” He saw interests as powerful innate forces that guide knowledge and, reciprocally, are guided by knowledge (Brunkhorst in Rasmussen & Swindal, 2003) within the individual and the social group which forms the basis of action (Habermas, 1984, 1987; How, 2003)²².

Interests constitute knowledge because they are necessary conditions for knowledge formation and are themselves the product of social interaction (Ottman, 1982). Ottman best captures the reciprocal nature of this concept of interests by indicating that the Latin origin of the word “interest” - *inter esse* -- actually translates as “to be in between.” Knowledge-constitutive interests can be understood as mechanisms of attraction between a person and a desired thing or state, or the advantages or benefits that motivate human beings to form their ideas of the world based on those benefits that accrue to them when they act on these ideas. This knowledge can be communicated

²² Habermas’s work resembles the extensive work of Foucault although their methods differ. Habermas surveys theory and ideas, while Foucault surveys the history of institutions. See p. 66 of this document for a further comparison.

between the environment --the lifeworld – and the personality structure itself in the form of “interactive” or “social competence” (Habermas, 2001), which is labeled as “social skills” in social work. Habermas proposed a direct relationship between interactive competence and internal behavioral controls (Habermas, 1998).

While there is a myriad of human interests, Habermas distilled all interests into three overarching categories – material/technical, social, and emancipatory – by which all human interests can be understood. These can be described more informally as the need for food and shelter; the need for human companionship and communication; and the need for physical safety and freedom of action.

Habermas’s interest in autonomy was originally framed as an interest in emancipation. However, interest in autonomy is not necessarily predicated on having oppressive circumstances from which one needs to be emancipated. The interest in autonomy is virtually identical to the social work value of self-determination.

Building on the ideas of Emmanuel Kant’s *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1969), Habermas proposed that a balancing of the three universal interests would result in an ideal social state comprised of “autonomously acting individuals whose decisions smoothly yield to the welfare of the whole” (Horkheimer, 1934, p.27). Habermas continued this search for an ideal speech situation in his later theory of communicative action.

Habermas’s desertion of knowledge-constitutive interests, to this writer, represents a shift away from an exclusively material conception of the coordination of social action. By elevating the interest in social connectedness to an intersubjective paradigm, Habermas does not so much refute the teleological idea of action as much as

subsume it into a more complex theory that assumes a source of action not *exclusively* motivated by self-interest, but supplemented by an essential stratum of action coordination based on the need to create meaning and build solidarity even in the absence of reward²³.

Overview of Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action

Habermas's theory of communicative action is articulated in two main volumes and several preliminary and subsequent volumes and articles (Habermas, 1984, 1987, 2000, 2001a). In the following section, this theory will be more fully outlined with an emphasis on those aspects that will be used to derive a theory that explains the effects of bullying. Where possible Habermas's own words will be used followed by an exegesis²⁴. In the section that follows the next one, these ideas will be directly applied to the topic of bullying²⁵.

²³ Habermas's theory would not be used to refute ideas of evolutionary biology but would classify these ideas as part of the *instrumentally* motivated actions described in greater detail below.

²⁴ Habermas has a dense, challenging writing style and presents the breadth of knowledge in his work. In attempting to develop an interdisciplinary theory, he refers frequently to philosophers such as Kant, Husserl, Hegel, and Nietzsche; sociologists and social theorists such as Marx, Parsons, Mead, and Weber; linguists such as Searle and Chomsky, and psychologists such as Freud, Piaget, Kohlberg, and Selman. His texts are almost completely theoretical and conceptual (Healy, 2000); however, he meticulously summarizes each theory he uses being careful to make sure the reader understands the concepts and ideas he is portraying.

These challenges can also be seen as strengths. Habermas rarely assumes a reader's prior knowledge and rewards the persevering reader with succinct summaries of the ideas of the other thinkers he discusses. His lack of illustration allows the social work reader to apply his theory to the social work profession and such social conditions as bullying and other forms of abuse.

²⁵ This writer decided to separate the explanation of Habermas's theory itself and the way that theory is being applied to the problem of school bullying. This was done because the original theory is complex and because the application of communicative action to the problem of bullying involves particular interpretations of the meaning of the theory as well as the derivation of concepts not directly suggested by Habermas.

Habermas and Rationality

In his theory of communicative action, Habermas seeks a theory to explain human processes rationally. He begins his two-volume work about his theory by explaining in depth his views on rationality (Habermas, 1984). This extensive explanation cannot adequately be represented here, but his project intends to increase our understanding of human processes of communication and coordination of action. Irrationality can be defined as anything that is not currently understood.

For this writer's project, rather than speaking of rationality, it is more appropriate to use the term "visibility" and to look at the ability of the theory of communicative action to make human processes visible. The idea of visibility will be revisited when speaking of the ability of a social theory to make human processes that are currently obscure more visible. The conditions and processes that give rise to meaning and action are the areas that the theory of communicative action tries to make rational, including the processes through which people acquire an ideology.

Habermas, in step with a fundamental tenet of critical theory, defines ideology as "communication distorted by power" (1979) and aims to discover the tools with which this distortion can be dissolved (Heath, 2001). According to Habermas, undistorted communication is consensual, in that it is generally accepted and communally derived, as opposed to being imposed by a will, even the will of a majority (Habermas, 1984, 1987). This dissolution of distortion relates to the Marxist idea of *praxis*, action taken that is free of "externally motivated behavior" (Jay, 1973, p. 4). This project will show how, using Habermas's ideas, some of the effects of bullying can be understood as arising from the distortion of communication.

The core technique which Habermas uses, universal pragmatics, is described and discussed in the following section

Universal Pragmatics

At the core of Habermas's theoretical project is a process he calls "universal pragmatics," or the search for the specific set of logically irreducible competencies and conditions that make knowledge and social action possible--Habermas terms these the "rules" of universal pragmatics (Habermas, 1979). Universal pragmatic involves the refinement of concepts and processes that link language to the objective and subjective reality. These rules apply equally to the verifiable nature of reality and to the subjective – intersubjectively created – experience until they are conceptually irreducible and contain no contradictions (Habermas, 2001c).

Habermas's method is to survey the ideas of Western philosophers and social scientists including linguists, social psychologists, psychologists, and, to a lesser extent, anthropologists, and compare these to life processes (Habermas, 1984, 1987, 2000). In his encyclopedic survey of ideas and theories, Habermas attempts to create a social theory that links language and the real world:

The describable reality of nature and society is formed in the interplay of language, cognition, and action, which is governed by universal-pragmatic rules. At the same time we ourselves produce the communicative context of the intersubjectively experienced lifeworld through speech acts that are governed by universal-pragmatic rules (Habermas, 2001c, p. 78).

While he does not specifically describe his project as such, Habermas tries to build a social theory that does not rely on metaphor but is actually based on a set of rules and conditions through which actions arise and knowledge is built. This project is similar to Marx and Engel's concept of dialectical materialism (Engels, 1954), but with the

addition of the intersubjective, and therefore, non-material processes not anticipated by early Marxists. Habermas examines the conditions under which communication is both effective – the ideal speech condition – and ineffective and misleading, and how action is coordinated. Technical accuracy is only a part of effective communication which also includes the ability to make one's self as well as one's idea understood and to negotiate meaning with one's hearers (D. M. Rasmussen & J. Swindal, 2002). Knowledge, then, is a combination of technical and verifiable information and information that is intersubjectively created.

Habermas can be understood to mean that his theory can be used to understand local human processes such as bullying when he says that “the universal-pragmatic rule system reveals the restrictions that the external reality of nature and society, on the one hand, and the internal reality of the cognitive and motivational make-up of the human organism, on the other, place on language (Habermas, 2001c, p. 78).” Habermas clearly indicates that the theories derived from universal pragmatics will apply equally to the intrapersonal experience, cognition, and motivation, and to the interpersonal nature of society.

Communicative and Instrumental Sources of Social Action

The process of universal pragmatics has led to a number of linguistic distinctions that represent distinctions in the real world. These distinctions have hitherto been largely invisible. The foremost of these distinctions is Habermas's separation of communication from instrumental speech/acts. Habermas uses the term “speech/acts” to denote the utterances and actions intended to convey meaning and induce or coordinate action. Within the theory of communicative action, speech/acts are divided into two categories:

instrumental action and *communicative* action. The former includes speech/acts intended to achieve a goal, and the latter includes speech/acts intended to achieve shared meaning or consensus. Only communicative speech/acts meet Habermas's standard of *true* communication, which, for him, is a reciprocal process. According to Habermas, the term "communication" as it is used by most people today, refers to whole classes of speech/acts that limit, suppress, and pervert true communication and subtly or grossly coerce others into taking actions that are often not in their own interest: as will be discussed below, instrumental speech/acts that coerce or manipulate do not require responses from the hearer, only compliance or non-compliance. Habermas's theory makes visible the fact that instrumental speech/acts give rise to little or no actual communication.

Habermas sees consensual communication as present in the social fabric in everyday acts of solidarity, friendship, and family life. As ordinary people engage in daily conversation about life and the world, provide mutual support, and negotiate common activities, they contribute to the development of conventions of shared meaning and build the social world. This often happens through a consensual process that may not be consciously determined or even understood by those involved. Efforts to reach consensus are Habermas's ideal form of communication (Habermas, 1986), and they necessarily require the recognition of different points of view, an essential condition for socially just communication. This mutual recognition is central to the ideal form of effective communication (Habermas, 1987; Honneth, 1995).

Habermas builds on the speech/act philosophy of the linguistic philosopher John Austin who distinguished different forms of speech/acts as “illocutionary” or “perlocutionary”:

Perlocutionary effects, like the results of teleological actions generally, are intended under the description of states of affairs brought about through intervention in the world. By contrast, illocutionary results are achieved at the level of interpersonal relation on which participants in communication come to an understanding with one another about something in the world. In this sense, they are not innerworldly but extramundane. Illocutionary results appear in the lifeworld to which the participants belong and which forms the background for their processes of reaching understanding. They cannot be intended under the description of causally produced effects. (Habermas, 1984, p. 293)

Habermas, summing up the difference between illocutionary, communicative action and perlocutionary, instrumental action, uses the term states:

Through *illocutionary acts* the speaker performs an action in saying something... through *perlocutionary acts* the speaker produces an effect upon the hearer. By carrying out a speech act he brings about something in the world (Habermas, 1984, p. 289).

By using the construct “states of affairs” to describe the effects of instrumental action, Habermas indicates that the different forms of action coordination change the state of the social environment. While Habermas himself does not elaborate on the specific nature of an instrumental or communicative state as such, he does describe the effects of instrumental and communicative action as mutually exclusive entities throughout his work. This idea of states will be an important key to understanding the effects of bullying in that instrumental and communicative states have unique and particular conditions. While manipulative instrumental action can mimic features of consensual communication, it is nevertheless an altered state: it has become instrumentalized (See below for further elucidation on this point).

Habermas describes how strategic instrumental action, the indirect manipulation of the social world, creates a state of being “instrumentalized.” An instrumental state can at times resemble a communicative state; it will, however, contain latent effects.

Habermas acknowledges that people can be manipulated into believing they are acting consensually but the instrumental effects remain latent in the speech/act (Habermas, 1984).

...there are countless cases of indirect understanding, where one subject gives another something to understand through signals, indirectly gets him to form a certain opinion or to adopt certain intentions by way of inferentially working up perceptions of the situation; or where, on the basis of an already habitual communicative practice of everyday life, one subject inconspicuously harnesses another for his own purposes, that is, induces him to behave in a desired way by manipulatively employing linguistic means and thereby instrumentalizes him for his own success (Habermas, 1984, p. 288).

Subtle and indirect forms of bullying, such as a systematic attack on a child’s reputation, will create an instrumentalized state; involved children who may think they are making an autonomous choice to stop being friends with the target are, in fact, having their own autonomy curtailed by the bully’s speech/acts. Likewise, an overt bully may coordinate action and acquire henchmen through instilling fear among his friends that unless they take part in the bullying process they may become a target themselves.

Habermas does not imply that the distinctions between communicative and instrumental action are always clear in the real world. In explicating his theory, he proposes a categorical distinction between instrumental and communicative action, an assertion he fully supports; however, these distinctions may not always be self-evident. While deception is a frequent occurrence and would explain how people can be manipulated into taking actions that benefit others while weakening themselves, Habermas goes to great lengths to explain that deception only works because there is a

reasonable expectation of honest communication (Habermas, 1984). Dishonesty, then, is rare enough in the social world that an unethical person can benefit from the expectation of honest interaction.

Habermas argues that “agreement can indeed be objectively obtained by force; but what comes to pass manifestly through outside influence or the use of violence cannot count subjectively as agreement” (Habermas, 1984, p. 287). Instrumental speech/acts actually serve to limit or entirely eliminate choice, or the autonomy of individuals and groups. That limitation of autonomy is a characteristic of the instrumental state.

Habermas defines communicative action as “the type of interaction in which *all* participants harmonize their individual plans of action with one another and thus pursue their illocutionary aims *without reservation* (Habermas, 1984, p. 294).” The term “communication” as used by Habermas is in accord with its Latin source *communicare*, “to share or join with,” whose literal root is “within the walls” – *con munis*. Communicative processes account for innumerable interactions that take place free of instrumental constraints and include, as described before, acts of meaning making, support, solidarity, and repair, and occur in such institutions as child rearing and friendship networks.

By separating communicative from instrumental action, Habermas does not devalue all teleologically-induced, instrumental actions since some of these, like some systems, are necessary tools for organizing complex tasks. Problems arise when instrumental action is used malevolently or to meet the needs of an individual, organization, or corporation which are at odds with the needs of the other members of the community.

The conceptualization of communication as speech/acts operating consensually represents a paradigm shift similar to social work's adoption of the strengths perspective (Antonovsky; 1996; Saleebey, 1996) in which social workers are challenged to privilege the strengths and resources of the individuals and communities with which they work and marshal those resources to solve social problems.

Lifeworld and Systems

Habermas, using his universal pragmatics technique, makes another categorical distinction between the "lifeworld" (*Lebenswelt*), the world of both organic life as well as constructed meaning, from the steering mechanisms that operate within the lifeworld with which societies organize themselves, which he calls "systems" (*System*) (Habermas, 1984).

By separating these phenomena of lifeworld and systems conceptually, Habermas provides a tool that can be used to explain the ways that administrative and economic systems work in favor of or against lifeworld needs for survival and well-being. The lifeworld necessarily involves organic and psychological processes, while systems may function in more linear and logical ways. Pathology arises when systems become separated, or "uncoupled" (*entkoppelt*), from lifeworld requirements.

Habermas sees the lifeworld as directly related to communicative action. "Every action oriented toward reaching understanding can be conceived as part of a cooperative process of interpretation aiming at situation definitions that are intersubjectively recognized" (Habermas, 1984, pp. 69-70). The lifeworld is the repository of culture and language as the lifeworld "stores the interpretive work of preceding generations" (Habermas, 1984, p. 70).

The concept of lifeworld may be better understood in light of the French translation of the German, which is *monde vécu*, or the “world as it is lived” (Ferry, 1991). Lifeworld processes are often constrained by the organic nature of life, such as the human need for survival, comfort, and social connectedness. The lifeworld operates according to the various needs and interests of living organisms. For human beings, these needs and interests include materials for survival and well-being, the creation of meaning, and the maintenance of social relationships. For children and their development, these needs and interests can be summed up as socialization. For Habermas, socialization:

secures for succeeding generations the acquisition of *generalized competencies for action* and sees to it that *individual life histories are in harmony with collective forms of life* (italics in the original). Interactive capacities and styles of life are measured by the *responsibility of persons* (Habermas, 1987, p. 141) .

The “generalized competencies for action” to which Habermas refers have direct relevance to this writer’s project on bullying and will be more fully elaborated below. From a social work perspective, these social competencies have a direct effect on the individual’s quality of life, as the ability to form and maintain relationships, even through conflict, is essential to the maintenance of marriage, the social network, and career. By “responsibility of persons” Habermas means the ability to understand the truth of the other person: this ability to take the position of the other Habermas sees as the apotheosis of social skills.

Systems are invented and implemented by human beings within the lifeworld in response to problems endemic to complex societies, such as the distribution of resources where direct barter and subsistence farming is not possible. Monarchies, capitalism, and democracies are examples of systems that organize complex societies by administering

justice and ensuring some form of distribution of goods using hereditary, military, economic, or democratic power, respectively (1987).

In describing the basis for political power, Habermas states:

The political system produces mass loyalty in both a positive and a selective manner: positively through the prospect of making good on social-welfare programs, selectively through excluding themes and contributions from public discussion. (Habermas, 1987, p. 346)

As stated previously, Habermas does not favor lifeworld over systems but sees individual and group pathology arising as a consequence of the constraints and assumptions that occur when a system becomes uncoupled from the lifeworld, by which Habermas means that the system is no longer responsive to or synchronized with the lifeworld (Habermas, 1974, 1987).

This categorical distinction between lifeworld and systems solves the problem of how and why individuals can act against their own interests and the interests of humankind, the environment, and other parts of the lifeworld. Acting on ideology, people are capable of undertaking roles that are not oriented to the needs of the lifeworld, rather they can ally themselves with a system that has uncoupled from the lifeworld (Brunkhorst, 1986). Actors taking a role within a system that is uncoupled from the lifeworld, such as the Nazi system, will follow the system's rules even though this may lead to genocide or other destruction of the lifeworld.

Another example of this uncoupling process is the stripping away of local cultural narratives in favor of mass media narratives designed to secure political compliance or consumerism (Reading, 1998), or the direct favoring of a capitalist or aristocratic class to the detriment of the general population. Habermas also points out that when systems

become uncoupled, manipulation replaces consensus as the dominant mode of interaction (Habermas, 1987).

Habermas (1987) suggests, for example, that local systems of meaning are stripped away when multinational corporate systems *colonize* the lifeworld with narratives that promote consumerism or compliance in the population to established political authority. This replacement of narratives results in the loss of local identities and local wisdom that served the purpose of helping the particular social group negotiate their environment, perhaps for centuries. Traditional stories that were meant to instruct children may get forgotten or buried in the onslaught of television narratives that promote the sale of superhero toys. The narratives that are prevalent on US television are ones that at worst support aggressive social roles and at best portray successful aggressive challenges to oppressive power (Graves, 2005).

In the following section, the building block of the consensual process, which Habermas terms the “validity claim,” will be explored.

The Validity Claim

Habermas suggests that consensual communication can be reduced to a fundamental unit which he calls the “validity claim,” the implicit or explicit claim based on the appeal to logic, justice, and sincerity. The validity claim is the method with which actors coordinate action among individuals without resorting to instrumental actions of coercion or incentivization, the induction of action through the use of rewards.

Habermas describes the validity claim as the:

processes of reaching understanding (that) aim at an agreement that meets the conditions of rationally motivated assent (*Zustimmung*) to the content of an utterance. A communicatively achieved agreement has a rational basis; it cannot be imposed by either party, whether instrumentally through intervention in the

situation directly or strategically through influencing the decisions of opponents (Habermas, 1984, p. 287).

Validity claims evoke three potential responses -- a negative response, a positive response, or a counterproposition. An accepted validity claim results in a commitment of some kind for some future action, if only to support the proposition. Agreement rests on common *convictions*. The speech/act of one person succeeds only if the other accepts the offer contained in it by taking (however implicitly) a “yes” or “no” position on a validity claim that is in principle able to be criticized. Both *ego*, who raises a validity claim, with his utterance, and *alter* (this writer’s italics), who recognizes or rejects it, base their decisions on potential grounds or reasons (Habermas, 1984, p. 287). The validity claim is not meant to be understood necessarily as a consciously applied activity; Habermas simply says that when we communicate a proposition, we base our claim on appeals of various types. Through pragmatic analysis, Habermas categorizes the basis of claims as technical, appeals based on logic; normative, appeals based on the conventions of law and general practice; and sincerity, appeals based on an emotional connection to the speaker. In other words, we accept a proposition from another person because we accept their logic, we accept that the proposition fits with normal practice, and/or because we trust the speaker.

Habermas sees the validity claim as the fundamental unit of the creation of the lifeworld and therefore, the development of language and culture. Conventions, such as norms and languages, develop through the action of enormous numbers of validity claims occurring reflexively in human communication in which meaning is assigned and refined in innumerable iterations similar to the actions of tides and currents.

Applying the theory of communicative action to the initial development of language in early human society, we can imagine a scenario in which a word becomes associated with an object in the physical world. An early human may have made a particular vocalization in reference to a particular edible plant, say a wild onion, in order to share the nourishment with others. That vocalization amounted to a proposition for others to associate that sound with that plant in the future. Such an event would be considered a validity claim. If the person making the claim had credibility based on expertise, perhaps as an adept provider or cook, it is more likely that the claim would be accepted, and others would continue to use that sound to represent that plant.

As a group continues to use that sound for that plant, through successive waves of validity claims, that sound becomes a word in a nascent language which is passed on to the next generation or onto another group. As language develops, it is likely that conventions also form, such as preferred cooking methods and foods that are pleasing with wild onion. Conventions may occur as enterprising early humans found ways to cultivate the onion, thus ensuring a steadier supply and contributing to a change from a hunter-gathering society to an agricultural society. The names and uses of the onion come together through the process of social interaction.

In the contemporary, postmodern period, these utterances and speech/acts may have a multiplicity of possible meanings depending on the social context and the uses to which knowledge is being put (Gottgroy et al., 2003); however, the result of social interaction, as in the example above, considered within Habermas's framework, is a mostly consensual process.

This example is an oversimplification necessary to help readers understand Habermas's conceptual framework. It is entirely conceivable that the development of language occurs in a way that mixes consensual and instrumental processes. Religion, for example, can instrumentalize eating habits with both proscriptions against eating certain foods and the ritualization of eating others²⁶; commodity fetishization, the accretion of value, of a rare food product, such as black truffles, may make it financially out of reach of most buyers, and thereby out of reach of most lifeworld members. In this way, consensus within the lifeworld is strategically overridden to benefit an administrative or economic system.

Validity claims and other forms of action coordination are predicted to have longer lasting effects within the lifeworld than action compelled through instrumental action through an invisible, internal process Habermas calls "illocutionary binding." This will be explained in the next section.

Illocutionary Binding

Validity claims that are accepted lead to further action through what Habermas calls a "binding process" (*Bindungsenergien*) (Habermas, 1984). Where instrumental action operates through interest, communicative action operates through a set of cognitive mechanisms that include conventions and commitments for future action. "With the illocutionary force of an utterance a speaker can motivate a hearer to accept the offer contained in his speech/act and thereby to accede to a *rationaly motivated binding* (or bonding; *Bindung*) force (Habermas, 1984, p. 278)."

²⁶ These may have had roots in the lifeworld in that proscriptions against eating certain foods may have arisen out of health concerns such as parasites and food spoilage.

Habermas proposes that the social actions based on communicative actions developed consensually in innumerable acts of love and solidarity are more powerful binding agents than those that arise from instrumental actions based on the desire to attain a specific goal. While this idea appears utopian given the volume of violence and oppression in human history, one needs to consider that innumerable acts of healing and creativity repair human communities during and after times of oppression and should be considered powerful counterforces.

Acts of repair may be essential components of the natural world. Both string theory and its more contemporary variant “M-theory”, in physics, contain a process by which tears in space/time that occur in extremely minute spaces are easily repaired by a symmetrical twin (Aspinwall et al., 1994). The complex mathematics of these theories is well beyond the discipline of social work; nevertheless, if only by metaphor, we can propose that repair processes are part of the fundamental nature of the universe. Ecological and biological repair and support processes, such as the body’s innate healing and protective abilities, are more obvious, accessible metaphors.

In the social world, Gottman and his colleagues, in a previously mentioned study, discovered a simple mathematical relationship that successfully predicts the stability of a marriage by the couple’s ability to generate five speech/acts of support to every one critical or negative act(1994). While Gottman doesn’t reference Habermas, his research can be seen as a voluminous trove of data on speech/acts within families containing 30 years of coded speech/acts and whose conclusion shows how support and solidarity are key to family cohesion, bonding.

Social history, history from the perspective of ordinary people, looks at the actions of numerous people making change over time. E.P. Thompson (1966), a founder of the social history movement, examines labor history from the perspective of laborers instead of the perspective of the political elite. Thompson finds that the labor movement began with myriad acts of sacrifice and creativity by ordinary people. Those people's actions are not found in the ordinary historical record. Acts of solidarity and support undergirded the effort to feed and clothe families during strikes and to provide emotional and physical support in the face of violent counteractions. These acts, for Habermas, are based on a binding process.

The binding process operates through each successful validity claim which results in a commitment to take action. The "speaker makes an offer that he is ready to make good insofar as it is accepted by the hearer" (Habermas, 1979, p. 61). When acting on coercive power, the action may be dependent on the proximal range of the authority, the distance after which the authority is no longer enforceable; conversely, the actions based on validity claim remain present in the lifeworld. Habermas, then, sees communicative actions as inherently stable.

The essential nature of the cognitive structure underlying commitment and convention is stability. Actions based on commitment or conventions are more likely to endure over time and may be generalized across different situations. It is through this binding process that knowledge gets turned into action. The ideas of binding are implicit in the work of attachment theorists who propose that much human suffering is caused by problems in the development of nurturing relationships (Bowlby, 1999) and are also consistent with Catalano's related theory of social development (Catalano et al., 2004).

Social Competencies, Identity, and Social Pathology

Habermas, in his one foray into intra-psycho processes, applies the theory of communicative action to the local level of family communication published in German in 1974 and reprinted in a collection of essays on the genesis of the theory of communicative action (D.M. Rasmussen & J. Swindal, 2002). He shows how unequal power relations in families distort communication and leads to repression strategies which vary in quality among differing cultures. The theme of conflicts which is prominent in his analysis, Habermas says that “the ego’s strength increases to the same extent that the ego is able to do without such (repression) strategies and to process its conflicts consciously...” (D.M. Rasmussen & J. Swindal, 2002, p. 136).

By conscious conflict processing, Habermas refers to the conditions of undistorted communication. He presents a nuanced picture of how mutual understanding is reached in a complex interplay of processes. To reach understanding involves the ability to express oneself and one’s ideas and to take in the other and her ideas in light of such communicative grey areas as prior knowledge, which he terms “pre-understanding” misunderstandings, and lack of understanding. He also catalogues such problems with communication obfuscation and the creation of false consensus, which he terms “pseudoconsensus.”

Habermas stresses that identity is the stable quality of the self. Identity is formed within the constraints of the resources available in the lifeworld, as well as in the face of stressful, contradictory role systems. Habermas lays out an argument for the ways that a person is optimally self-realized in the ideal communication context, through consensual and intersubjective processes:

Corresponding to the ideal communication community is an *ego-identity that makes possible self-realization on the basis of autonomous action* (italics in the original)... In the course of the process of individualization, the individual has to draw his identity behind the lines of the concrete lifeworld and of his character as attached to this background. The identity of the ego can then be stabilized only through the abstract ability to satisfy the requirements of consistency, and thereby the conditions of recognition, in the face of incompatible role expectations and in passing through a succession of contradictory role systems (Habermas, 1987, p. 97).

Another aspect of theory of communicative action is identity formation. Identity is formed, according to Habermas, in a dialectical process between the child's own character, with its unique configuration of interests, abilities, limitations, and tastes, and the child's experience of both the lifeworld and the systems within it. The goal of identity-building is to form a functional adult identity that can help the person successfully negotiate the world. This identity needs to be capable of change:

The ego-identity of the adult proves its worth in the ability to build up new identities from shattered or superseded identities, and to integrate them with old identities in such a way that the fabric of one's interactions is organized into the unity of a life history that is both unmistakable and accountable. (Habermas, 1987, 98)

Habermas introduces the idea of the formation of identity through narrative processes in which he sees the individual taking responsibility for the formation and adaptation of her own identity. Identity is the essential condition for recognition, by which he means the enduring condition in which the individual remains in a stable relationship with the lifeworld. As a relatively stable phenomenon, the identity of an adult forms the basis through which the person interacts with the world. This idealized self-realized ego would be able to form lasting relationships precisely because it can be consistent as well as flexible.

An ego-identity of this kind simultaneously makes possible self-determination and self-realization... To the extent that the adult can take over and be responsible for his own biography, he can come back to himself in the narratively preserved traces of his own interactions. Only one who takes over his own life history can see in it the realization of the self. Responsibility to take over one's own biography means to get clear about *who one wants to be*, and from this horizon to view the traces of one's own interactions as *if* they were deposited by the actions of a responsible author, of a subject that acted on the basis of a reflective relation to self (Habermas, 1987, pp. 98-99).

Jean-Marc Ferry builds on Habermas's view of identity formation as a discursive process, comparing the formation of identity with the transformative nature of narrative through which life events acquire unique overlays of meaning (Ferry, 1991). An observable event may appear to have a singular meaning on a concrete level, but in reality will have innumerable potential meanings when recounted in language. This idea of identity being formed on the basis of repeated and enduring experiences will be more fully explored in terms of the experience of bullying victimization and the ways this can give rise to social and intra-psychic pathology.

Habermas bases his analysis of social pathology on the ways that "communication" diverges from the ideal (Habermas, 1987; Honneth, 1992). Habermas theorizes that healthy identity is best formed under ideal speech conditions that, for children, include free play as well as other autonomous interactions with peers and adults. He says that "the structures of non-alienated social intercourse (referring to communicative action) provoke action orientations; they are aimed at filling in the spaces for reciprocal self-realization" (Habermas, 1987, p. 97). In non-instrumental communication, children can explore their interests, proclivities, tastes, skills, and weaknesses within their own cultural and sub-cultural contexts contributing reciprocally to the formation of identity as well as meaning.

There is a very strong association between behavior and social skills, Habermas argues. He asserts that his

point of departure is the assumption that interactive competence regulates the construction (*Aufbau*²⁷) of internal behavioral controls... interactive competence is measured not according to the ability to solve problems of knowledge and moral insight at the appropriate level, but according to the ability to maintain processes of reaching mutual understanding even in conflict situations rather than breaking off communication or merely seeming to maintain it (p 135).

The idea that communication needs to be maintained even through conflict is key to Habermas's view of this link between behavior and social competence. He privileges this process of reaching mutual understanding and makes it the keystone of his project of discourse ethics in which he proposes that the constitutional state be built based upon a consensus among all groups on essential issues. Consensus can only be arrived at if and when all involved parties are able to hear each other even when their positions are in conflict. Individuals raised with the best social skills...

learn to orient themselves within a universalistic framework, that is, to act autonomously. On the other hand, they learn to use this autonomy, which makes them equal to every other morally acting subject, to develop themselves in their subjectivity and singularity... Universalistic action orientations reach beyond all existing conventions and make it possible to gain some distance from the social roles that shape one's background and character. (Habermas, 1987, p. 97)

Habermas (1974) proposes a schema of the development of interactive competence that should take place in societies that have a commitment to equality for its citizens²⁸. At the top of the set of communicative competence is the ability to take the perspective of the other person. This is Habermas's key argument against the cultural relativism that is prevalent in poststructuralist thinking. Habermas believes that children

²⁷ The term *Aufbau* also translates as "development" which may be more consistent with Habermas's own view of the process of acquiring communicative competence.

²⁸ Habermas argues that societies that do not have universally accepted conventions for fundamental human rights social competencies that lead to universal participation may be obstructed or suppressed. To test this assumption would require an extensive ethnographic and anthropological study and is not germane to the topic of bullying.

will develop the advanced competencies that will allow leadership by consensus in the absence of systemic constraints against taking the perspective of others into account. It is this constraint against taking into account the perspective of others that is at the heart of oppressive regimes such as Nazi Germany: genocide would not take place if all people, including the oppressed group, were allowed to take part in the decisions that affected their own lives.

Habermas looks at social competencies as the building blocks of a just society with the ability to take the perspective of the other person as the highest level of competence. While intelligence and goal-oriented behavior are keys to academic and vocational achievement, social skills are the key to a successful social life for all members of society. The ability to form and maintain relationships vastly improves the quantity and quality of an individual's life experience entirely apart from career, education, and intelligence and will apply equally to people with significant developmental delays as to those with significant internal and external resources.

Instrumental experiences that are decoupled from the lifeworld, which includes victimization and abuse, can distort identity and give rise to pathologies:

This (distortion) can be seen in disturbances of the socialization process, which are manifested in psychopathologies and corresponding phenomena of alienation. In such cases, actors' competencies do not suffice to maintain the intersubjectivity of commonly defined action situations. The personality system can preserve its identity only by means of defensive strategies that are detrimental to participating in social interaction on a realistic basis, so that the resource of "ego strength" becomes scarce (Habermas, 1987, p. 141)

In the following section the above theory will be applied and adapted to explain the effects of bullying experiences.

APPLYING AND DERIVING A THEORY

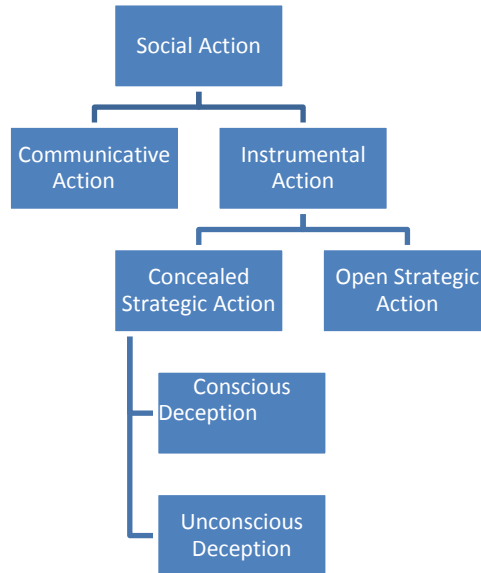
In this section, the connections between Habermas's theory of communicative action and the topic of school bullying will be explored. The philosopher's concepts will be applied directly to bullying and new concepts will be derived following through on the logic inherent in his social theory. An important caveat must be added here in that what is presented here is this writer's interpretation of Habermas's concept. This writer was unable to communicate with Professor Habermas and is not educated in either of the two disciplines associated with the theory of communicative action: philosophy and sociology

There has been no research in the English and French databases and search engines directly or indirectly applying Habermas's ideas of communicative action to children's development; there are researchers applying the philosopher's ideas in Germany (Brunkhorst, 2003 personal communication), but their results are not yet published in English. Due to the lack of English-language research, Habermas's ideas will be explored conceptually and the related to the results of studies in this systematic review.

With the exception of his essay on family communication (D.M. Rasmussen & J. Swindal, 2002), Habermas applies his theory to the building of a just state and his research involves constitutional law and statecraft more than individual psychology. In this section, the connections between Habermas's macro level theory and the topic of school bullying within the peer context will be drawn.

The starting point for this collection of typologies is Habermas's own (1987) descriptive typology of social action (Figure 3), which this writer will then adapt to bullying (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Habermas's Descriptive Typology of Social Action (Habermas, 1984, p. 333)



Constructing an Explanatory Typology

In exploring Habermas's theory of communicative action for the first time, this writer had a sense that it could be applied directly to explain the breadth of the bullying phenomenon, including all or most of its effects. Habermas's ideas about the nature and context of communication seemed to hold promise in explaining how the abuse of power in bullying would diminish a target's social competence and distort her cognition. In this section, this theory will be explored for both its direct application and for the derivation of concepts that can explain the effects of bullying. Where possible, these ideas will be presented in the form of constructed typologies.

Latent Variables/Varying Visibility

Constructing typologies of explanation about the effects of bullying will involve the use of *latent* variables, variables based on theoretical concepts, such as illocutionary binding, that are not visible or directly measurable (Borsboom, Mellenbergh, & van

Heerden, 2003; Lazarsfeld, 1937; Lazarsfeld & Henry, 1968; J. C. McKinney, 1966; J.C. McKinney & Kerckhoff, 1962). The concept of invisibility is not monolithic. Human processes are invisible for a number of reasons. Some invisible human processes, like other processes in the physical world, can only be perceived through their traces; others occur in plain sight but are ignored.

Table 4 below shows different levels of visibility of human processes. Internal states, for example, had been seen as invisible to researchers until Likert (1932) developed a method to measure Freudian concepts. Likert makes subjective states visible by simply asking people to rate their self-perceptions. Still, a preverbal or verbally inaccessible child is not able to represent herself and her anxiety and depression, so these invisible states would need to be discerned from their visible traces: the child may stop having fun, have somatic complaints, or wake up with nightmares. For these research techniques that involve observable aspects of hidden phenomenon, I have borrowed the term “perturbative” from physics because it represents a term that can be applied to social sciences. Using a particle accelerator, physicists cause a reaction among particles, and try to learn about invisible particles through the effects of the collision on more visible particles. Social scientists are ethically constrained not to cause harm by evoking reactions experimentally in their subjects in order to determine effects, but bullying researchers can be said to be examining in their subjects the perturbation that the bullying itself has already caused.

Table 4: Levels of Visibility of Human Processes

Level of Visibility	Ways of Increasing Visibility	Examples	Research Methods
Visible	Part of common knowledge as well as scientific inquiry	Purchasing habits and other reward-based behaviors	Observation
Invisible in Plain Sight	Making visible processes that are routinely ignored	Bullying as a problem has existed for generations but was routinely ignored by adults.	Observation with the aid of a model or theory
Invisible due to Complexity	Making visible processes that are too complex and multifaceted to be perceived. Computers are helpful in organizing large numbers of factors	Social problems such as poverty which may have multiple causes	Large databases and conceptual ontologies data mining. Sweeping surveys as in the work of Foucault and Habermas
Invisible with Traces	Making visible through their traces. Perturbative methods make visible processes that are invisible but have an effect (different types of effects)	Cognitive and emotional states of preverbal children. Neurological, biochemical, and other physical processes	Observation or survey of symptoms that indicate the presence of an unseen problem

Time and space are important considerations in a theory of the social world and are often neglected by those building a theory (George & Gareth, 2000). Temporal considerations are especially relevant to the study of children considering the changes that occur as they develop physically, mentally, and socially over a relatively short period of time. Bullying itself is a temporal phenomenon as it is defined in part by its repetition or endurance over time; it also has a strong spatial effect in that it shrinks the space in which a child feels secure (Andrews & Chen, 2006) and in which she is able to autonomously develop. The effects of bullying are also temporal, ranging from the immediate effects to the child to iterative--characterized by repetition--cognitive and

affective processes that produce long-lasting effects on her psyche and social status.

Temporal and spatial elements will be considered in applying and adapting the theory of communicative action to the problem of bullying.

Habermas's Descriptive Typology

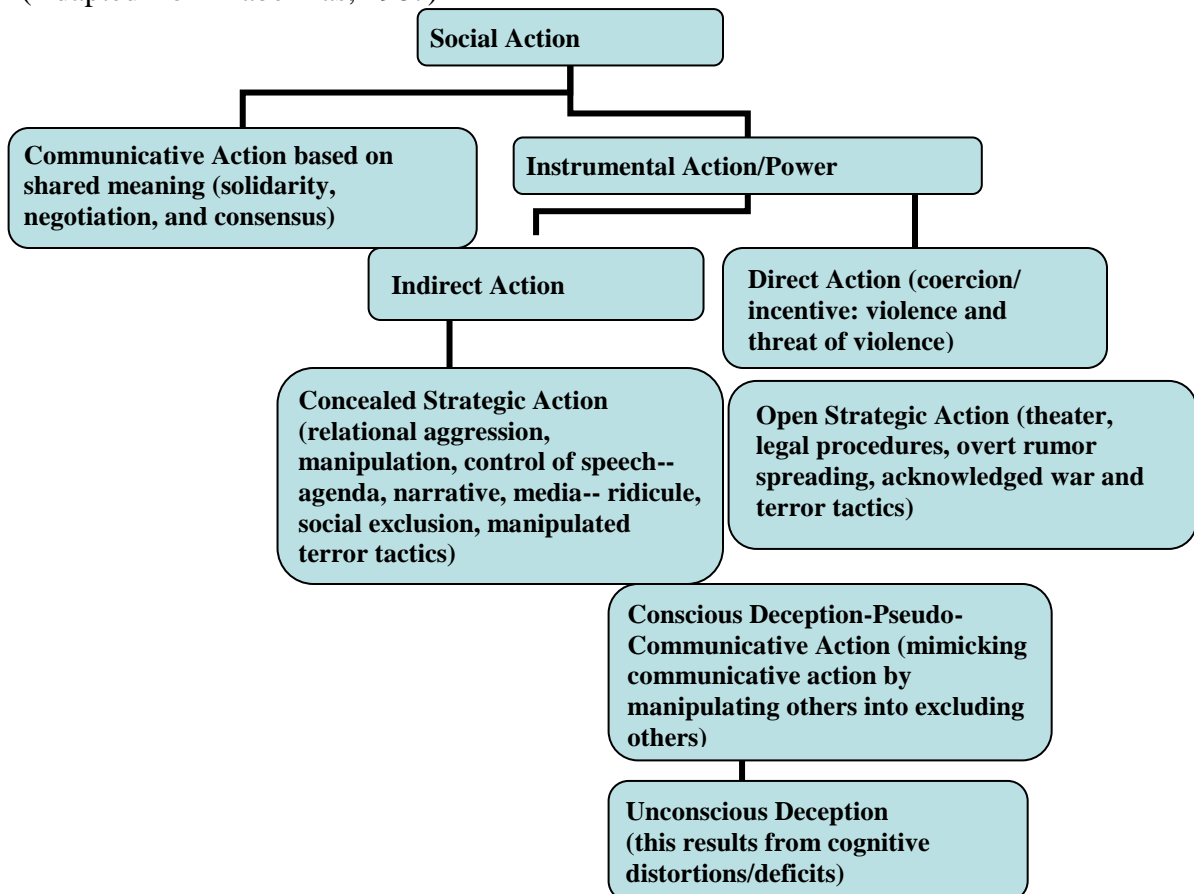
Habermas uses the technique of constructing typologies extensively in his two-volume explanation of the theory of communicative action, although, with few exceptions, these typologies are used to describe phenomena rather than explicate theory (Habermas, 1984, 1987). In this section, the theory will be applied to the phenomenon of bullying. Examples from the bullying literature and other forms of power abuse have been added to each box to illustrate their fit with Habermas's theory. These connections will also be outlined in the following paragraphs as will a set of derived concepts with which to build a theoretical understanding of the mechanisms involved when children are bullied.

Figure 4 adapts Habermas's typology of social action from Figure 3 by adding examples from the bullying literature. As has been discussed above, Habermas divides instrumental action into direct and indirect actions: actions taken by an actor directly toward another actor (or actors) and actions taken through intermediaries, respectively. Direct instrumental action includes a set of speech/acts that are intended to affect another person directly, including commands and incentives on one end of the spectrum of coercion to threats and violence at the other end. Strategic instrumental action includes a set of speech/acts that, when used covertly, are carried out by other people without the knowledge of the target; for example, in relational bullying, the spreading of rumors to

diminish a child's social network is both strategic and concealed: the victim may never find out who initiated the rumor campaign.

Actions that are both open and strategic are not concealed. Neutral forms of open strategic activities include theatre, pageantry and religious or spiritual ritual. Some forms of bullying share features with both theater and ritual in that they take place in front of an audience in a predetermined space and may be considered entertainment. Habermas also considers legal and military procedures to be, at times, open, insofar as the rules of the interaction are predetermined, and strategic insofar as the framers of the law or policy are not present.

Figure 4: Instrumental Sources of Social Action and Types of Bullying
(Adapted from Habermas, 1987)



The Effects of Bullying

In this section, the mechanisms of effect of bullying will be examined. First will be described the contemporaneous effects then the long-lasting developmental effects.

As has been noted review of literature above, bullying is at least partially responsible for a variety of ill-effects. When other sources of stress and trauma in the lives of bullying targets are controlled for, bullying still appears to be a potent force; however, many bully-involved children have likely experienced other forms of trauma and victimization.

Each of the following subsections ends with a list of specific effects that would be expected to be quantified in existing or future research efforts.

Contemporaneous Geographical and Spatial Effects within the Lifeworld

Being bullied shrinks the space that is safe for the victimized child as well as many of her peers (Andrews & Chen, 2006; Percy-Smith & Matthews, 2001): it changes the child's lifeworld, using Habermas's term. Bullying may alter the way the child experiences the bus to school, its hallways, bathrooms, locker rooms, and classrooms. The geography of childhood is relatively circumscribed; in most cases, the young child's world consists of her home, a small part of the social space of her community, such as its parks and stores, the homes of a small number of relatives and friends, and the school.

Bullying has a spatial effect within the lifeworld, further limiting the already narrow space in which the target child lives. The target experiences a narrowing of the safe space in her world. Depending on the nature of the child, this will have an immediate effect on her physical organism: she may become hyper-aware of her surroundings and

will likely be scared in those unsafe environments; this fear and arousal may make it hard for her to relax and enjoy other experiences. Being continually or repeatedly afraid, she may engage in less social and physical activity and may experience a diminishment of attention and academic progress.

Some children may experience their entry into the victim role as a trauma and have symptoms related to post-traumatic stress disorder, including sleeplessness, re-experiencing the traumatic event, nightmares, and recurring physical effects, such as increased heart rate. Bullying, however, differs from trauma in that it is by definition an ongoing, repetitive and enduring condition. Bullying then may have two distinct modalities of effect: an initial trauma and/or a continuous accumulation of stress. Some percentage of victimized children will be expected to experience symptoms of trauma, but the majority of children will be affected through a slower, more cumulative process.

Within the empirical literature on bullying, the following effects could be measured in empirical studies:

- fear and anxiety around school
- physical symptoms associated with fear and anxiety
- diminished physical activity
- diminished attention to academic work
- sadness and depression
- sleep disturbance
- social isolation/loneliness
- symptoms of trauma

Temporal and Internal Effects of Bullying

Enduring bullying experiences in the environment may start to create ongoing and enduring problems some of which may continue even if the bullying ceases. Finkelhor and Hashima (1995) term these “developmental” effects.

A child who is experiencing anxiety and fear on an ongoing basis may start thinking and feeling differently about her world than she did previously and compared to non-bullied peers: these effects can be described under the rubric of cognitive and affective distortion. For this project, these internal processes can be measured and can be classified as temporal because due to the ongoing and cumulative nature of bullying over time. These include temporal cognitive and affective processes, such as negative self-esteem and self-derogation and continuing low mood or depressive symptoms.

The physical symptoms associated with fear and anxiety may start to turn into physical complaints, and a child may have more excused and unexcused absences from school. Within the empirical literature on bullying, one would expect to see evidence of..:

- somatic symptoms
- generalized anxiety (as opposed to fear of the school environment only)
- depression
- low self-worth, low self-esteem, high self-derogation
- externalization, such as aggression or conduct difficulties
- absenteeism from school
- lowering of academic performance
- continued and worsening patterns of social isolation and/or withdrawal

Some of the mechanisms involved when children are affected by bullying are not as easily explained as the above variables. The mechanisms through which bullying experiences can be expected to adversely affect a child's identity formation and to impede the acquisition of a full set of social competencies are not immediately apparent in existing theory. In the next section, Habermas's theory of communicative action will be applied to deepen the understanding of the corrosive nature of bullying.

Bullying and Communicative Action

The above sections predict a connection between experiences of bullying victimization and both mood and cognition. Repeated and enduring stressful and humiliating experiences will distort a child's thinking and feeling, but a large part of the effects of bullying victimization derives from the target's lack of supportive and anodyne experiences available within a rich lifeworld. The subtle and less visible mechanisms through which the experiences of bullying victimization undermine healthy processes can be derived from Habermas's theory of communicative action. These latent, theorized, variables include the deprivation of communicative states or contexts, including play; lessening of autonomy; distortion of identity; and the distortion of cognition based on the experience of bullying.

While adapting Habermas's ideas for use in social work with children and schools, it becomes clear that children overall experience a great many instrumental actions or instrumental social conditions. The institutional arrangement of schools, as Noguera (1995) describes it, is almost entirely comprised of instrumental actions: children have to walk, talk, and sit when told by adults, are put into lines and ranks, and have their behavior monitored in almost all settings. This institutional arrangement narrows the social space available for autonomous states such as free play.

While bullying is "instrumental" in its nature, it is also highly idiosyncratic and largely ineffective. By *ineffective*, it's meant that children involved in bullying are not learning effective skills of instrumental action through the bullying in which power is exercised in ways that positively affect the lifeworld; rather, they are learning skills that are consistent with adult abuses of power, including coercion of innocents and

humiliation in its various forms. While the effects of bullying on the bullies and bystanders are outside the purview of this project it is clear that these non-victimized children also experience an array of ill-effects. It is not effective for any children involved.

Bullying would only be considered to be *effective* instrumental action if, as with the Hitler Youth movement, the society deems it desirable to reproduce brutal and ruthless adults, as Kamenetsky (1996) asserts was done by the National Socialists. In the case of the educational policy aimed at the Hitler Youth movement, the reproduction of adult coercive roles was *effective*, although not moral.

Bullying and communicative action are mutually exclusive within a single social interchange. In general, children have relatively few opportunities to shape their own social environment. In school, this can take place most often only during recess and lunch breaks. When bullying, as instrumental action, enters the play environment at school, the involved children will experience no non-instrumental environment during their school day.²⁹ Children who have restrictive home and community environments may have no social space in which they can operate autonomously.

Many of the effects of bullying can be understood to arise from the breach of communicative contexts resulting in the child's deprivation of many opportunities for support and learning. This includes the deprivation of play which can be understood as the crucible in which children learn and practice the widest range of social skills.

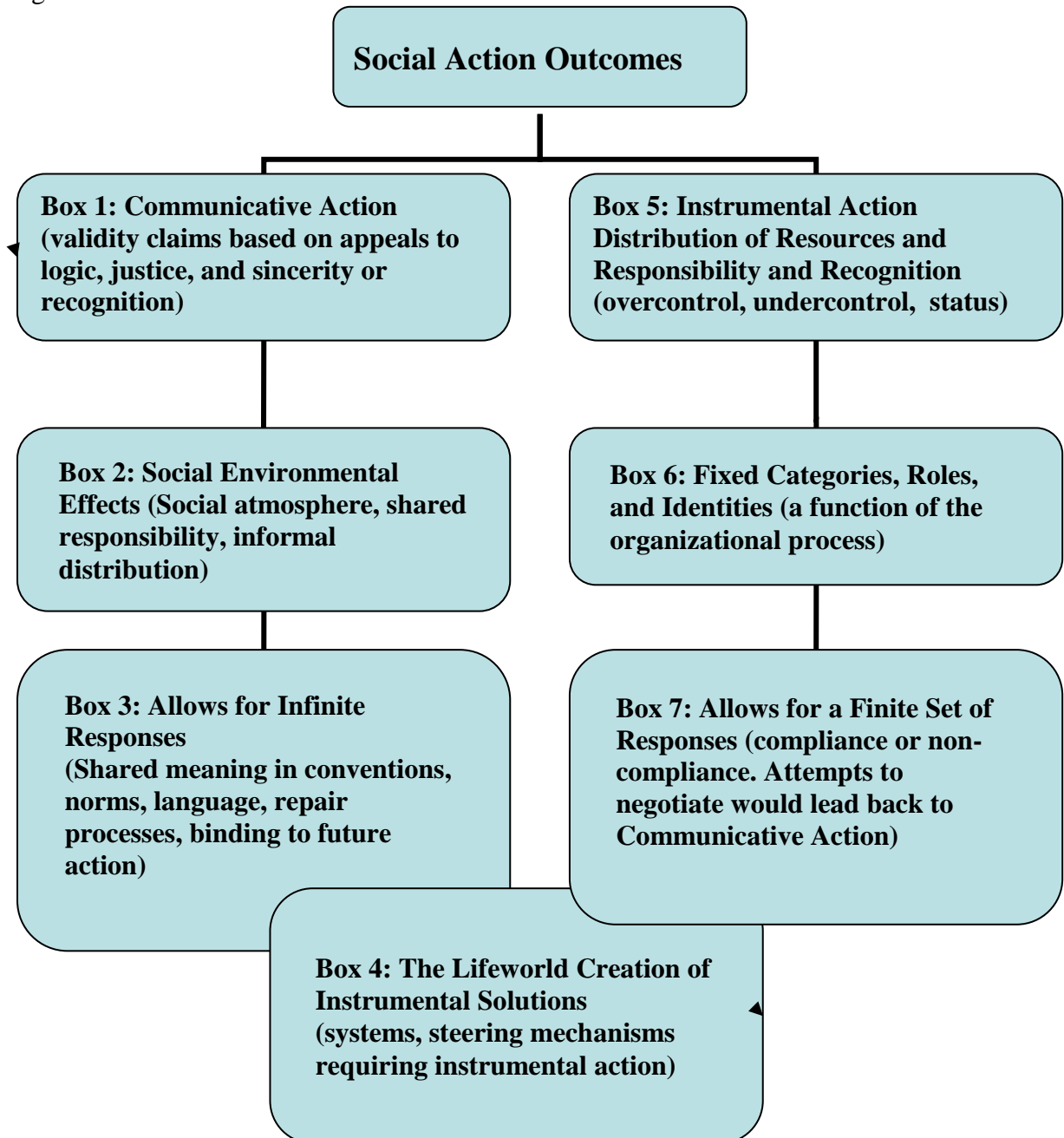
²⁹ Actions that appear to have the features of bullying, such as rough-and-tumble play and face-maintaining teasing, are still part of communicative action and may help children to develop successful strategies for dealing with bullies.

As was elucidated above, Gottman found the need for a preponderance of supportive words and gestures to sustain a marriage; from this can be extrapolated the importance of positive social skills as a resilience factor in relationships in general.

Play as Communicative Action

As was touched upon in the review of the theoretical literature, Children's play and communicative action share the common feature of speech/acts with no stated or recognizable goal (Lever, 1978). Habermas assumes his analysis of communication among adults to be an end state after childhood (D.M. Rasmussen & J. Swindal, 2002), and it can be taken as given that these skills are practiced and learned in childhood. What follows is an analysis of communicative action among children.

Figure 5: Social Action Outcomes of Communicative and Instrumental Actions



To illustrate the contrast between communicative and instrumental action, Figure 5 includes the nature and features of both. The first box shows the validity claim. A

validity claim can be understood as any attempt to convince others to act in a particular way when such an attempt is devoid of coercive elements.

Children try to influence their social world in myriad ways, but only among their peers are the power dynamics sufficiently level to allow for mutual influence. Within imaginative play, children will recreate adult roles. They learn adult skills through this play, including convincing others to act in a certain way. When children make suggestions and explain the logic, albeit in a childlike manner, of their suggestions these meet the criterion for validity claims. A research agenda directly based on Habermas's ideas could shed light on the links between children's pretend play and the development of communicative competence.

The nature of the validity claim (Box 2) is that it allows a hearer the freedom to respond in an infinite variety of ways, including making counter-suggestions, or even simply ignoring the original actor. Children's responses are limited only by their developmental stage and limited life experience; however, their imaginations may make up for these limitations.

The next step (Box 3) in the schema of social action is the development of meaning and norms that lead to future action. Habermas's idea of a consensual speech/act is a speech/ act jointly formed and mutually agreed upon; it will likely have a lasting effect, possibly enduring in some form across multiple generations. This is true in the creation of language, particularly idiomatic language. Communicative contexts allow for innumerable acts of support and repair.

Instrumental action itself is generated through lifeworld processes (Box 4) through steering mechanisms intended to solve a complex problem. Box 4 is left

deliberately unconnected to either the instrumental or communicative sides and indicates an instrumental speech/act, or imperative, in whatever form it may take. The response to an imperative, unlike a validity claim, is finite. The intention of the action may vary greatly but the response is to obey, disobey, or pretend to obey (pseudo-consensus).

“Distribution of resources” is the term being used here as it can encompass such abstract commodities as recognition and status, as well as concrete resources, such as money and food. Roles and identities adhere to differing forms of instrumental action (Brunkhorst, 1986); the roles of bully and victim are those under discussion in the current project.

The final box on the right side (Box 8) shows the range of responses to an established steering mechanism including a counter-response, such as a rebellion, and, ideally, a return to communicative action, if the steering mechanism is no longer able to meet the needs for which it was originally formed. Boxes 4 and 8 show how social action can be understood to be circular as instrumental and communicative action function in tandem.

In the following section, these ideas will be applied to the mechanisms of effect specifically suggested by Habermas’s theory of communicative action.

TYPOLGY OF EXPECTED EFFECTS

In this section, the mechanisms of effect of bullying predicted by Habermas’s theory of communicative action will be explored. Each subsection looks at a different type of effect and ends with a list of specific and measurable effects as well as a concept map of the mechanism. The separate mechanisms will be related in a complete model in the final subsection.

Spatial Effects

The initial adverse effects of bullying are related to the shrinking of the physical and social space of the target. A child who is being bullied will likely react with fear and anxiety that is specific to the locale of the bullying. She may also, sometimes for the first time, begin to fear people if only the bully and those children that collude with the bullying. For the target who is bullied relationally, her social life may be suddenly changed, and she may experience the loss of some or most of her companions. This experience may be sufficient to catalyze a depressive episode, even a suicide attempt, and may spark the development of an anxiety disorder that generalizes beyond the school environment. The targeted child will almost certainly stop enjoying at least part of her school experience and may begin to be less attentive in class: it is likely, however, that if the bullying is stopped early enough, the contemporaneous effects will clear up quickly.

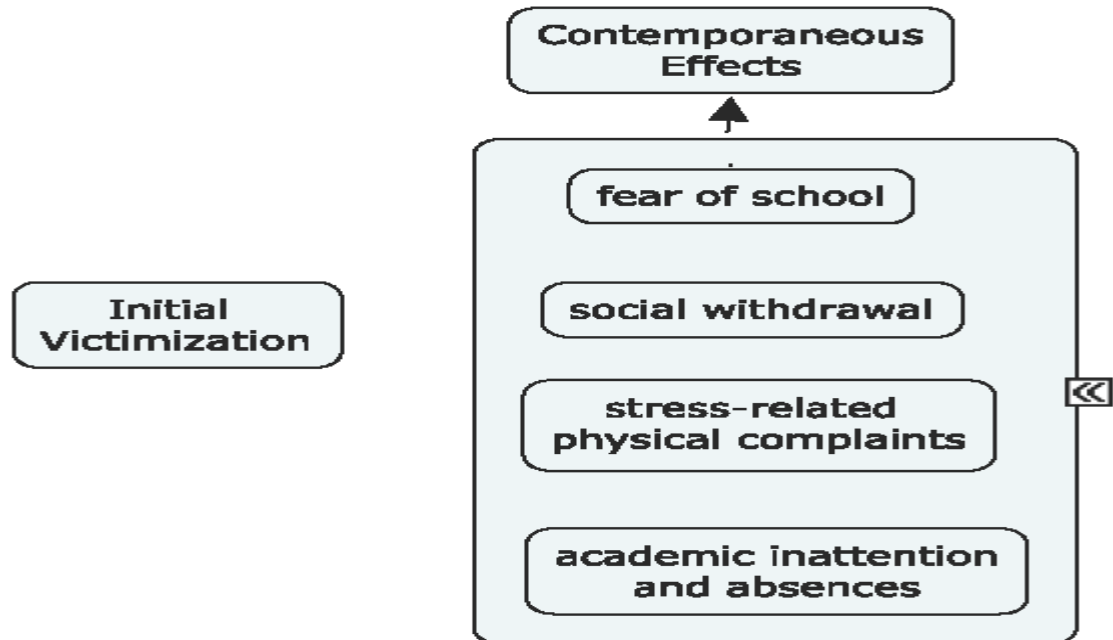
As has been discussed above, victimization may begin at any age throughout childhood, so a target child who has experienced bullying before may develop more resilience resources over time; however, a teenager, for whom peer relationships are of primary importance, may experience the destruction of her rich social life as a cataclysmic loss.

The expected contemporaneous effects of being bullied on the victim would be:

- anxiety related to the specific locations of the bullying (school, bus, bathroom, etc...)
- physical symptoms related to stress, including somatic complaints
- symptoms of post-traumatic stress
- social withdrawal or isolation

Figure 6 below shows a concept map of the contemporaneous effects of being bullied.

Figure 6: Contemporaneous Effects of Being Bullied



Breach Effects: Experiential Impoverishment or Deprivation

The term “breach effects” has been chosen to describe the set of bullying effects that is predicated upon the deprivation or impoverishment of positive experiences inherent in communicative contexts. These breach effects include lack of opportunity for the acquisition of communicative competence and the alienation from a myriad of solidarity and support experiences that that entails. Such continuous deprivation compromises the opportunities to form an identity in an autonomous peer environment.

Communicative experiences in childhood are the precursors to a healthy adult identity and the acquisition of a wide range of social skills. Habermas stresses the role of

social skills in the creation of a just state; and social skills are also seen as the key to a rich and satisfying life for the individual. The primacy of social competence in Habermas's theory of communicative action is the key to understanding and predicting the ways that bullying affects children's development by depriving children of a major source of such competence.

Bullying, as an instrumental state, can be expected to lessen the quantity of communicative contexts the target experiences. The bullying affects the child's social world in two ways: it usually isolates the child from her peers through a systematic undermining of the social network, and it may also change the quality of peer interactions over time. As a result, the child will not learn the social competencies required to take part in adult consensual processes, will not be able to take in the perspective of the other, and will not develop an identity that fits with her individual nature. Instrumental contexts also shape the child's identity through the use of power resulting in an inauthentic, distorted and weakened identity.

Not only can bullying change the cognitive and affective experience, it can change the actual and objectively quantifiable experience of the child. The child forms a world view based on the quality of her personal experiences. Where Burger and Luckman (1966) propose that individuals can construct their own social world, Kokko's idea of cumulative continuity shows how experience of either instrumental or communicative states can determine the actual quantity and quality of those experiences. Two children in the same social environment, then, can have two diametrically opposed experiences of their own childhoods and form different identities and worldviews based on those different experiences.

The damage bullying causes may be predicated on the degree to which the victimized child is deprived of communicative social contexts. The deprivation of play – which is the corollary to the deprivation of communicative social contexts – will have multiple, serious, effects as described above.

A child with other social venues outside of school in which to experience consensual interactions may well be less affected by the bullying than the child who experiences instrumental environments in other contexts. Olweus (1980), in one of the foundational bullying studies, showed that victimized children did tend to have more authoritarian parenting, but that variable has not been studied in more recent effects studies.

Controlling for these multiple contexts will be important in future research to determine whether the quantity of communicative experiences plays a role in determining the degree of damage done by bullying.

Identity can be damaged through the limitation of communicative contexts. As Erikson (1974) and, later, Ferry (1991) points out, identity formation is a dialectical process requiring the freedom to test out one's own preferences and predilections within a complex social life. In instrumental contexts, the child does not explore a wide set of preferences and experiences, and her identity is less likely to be adaptive to the potentially ambiguous and conflictual aspects of the adult social world. Problems of identity formation, as with early onset depression, are co-morbid with adult psychiatric illness as an identity is a primary element of adaptive functioning. As will be seen in the next section, identity can be adversely affected by bullying as well as directly affected.

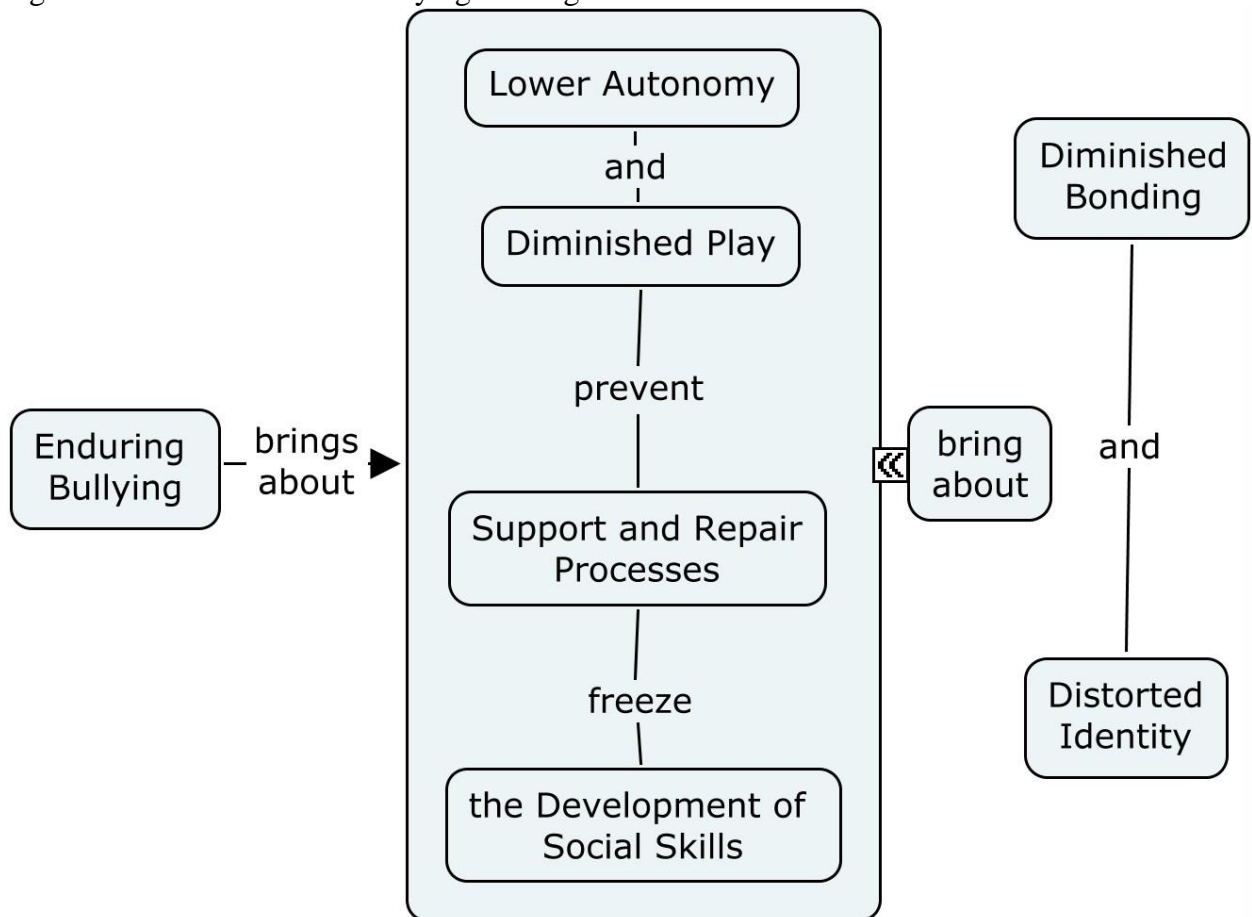
Based on Habermas's theory, one would predict that the bonding that arises from bullying would be less effective than that arising from consensual communicative

contexts. Attachments in school and with peers may be measurably weaker and would result in less deeply felt commitments to the school and peer group.

Within the empirical literature on bullying, one would expect to see evidence of:

- lower levels of play and physical activity among victims of bullying
- lower levels of perceived autonomy of action
- a progressive decline in social skills during extended periods of bullying or a lack of improvement in social skills over time
- lower levels of social bonding
- distorted or less-fully formed identity

Figure 7: Breach Effects of Bullying on Target



Theoretically-Derived Variables such as Identity, Distortion, and Restriction

Direct effects are those effects that directly confirm Habermas's theory of communicative action. It would be unlikely to find much direct confirmation of

Habermas's ideas within this systematic review as none of the studies explicitly base their research on his theory. These direct effects include the verification of his concepts such as illocutionary bonding and the acts of repair and solidarity that he asserts make up communicative action. Direct effects also include the continuing exposure to maladaptive instrumental social skills which may be directly limiting and distorting. The most significant source of distortion most likely comes from the role and label *victim* itself. The child begins to think of herself in light of that limited role and well-meaning anti-bullying strategies may perpetuate this label by identifying children as victims and treating them as such.

In children's peer relationships, power may have direct effects inherent in its nature. The children obeying a more powerful child are not exercising their own interests. A child habitually bullied will have fewer chances to take leadership roles and practice a variety of social skills. While there has been no published study quantifying the amount of play engaged in by bullies and targets, it can be assumed that both the bully and victim roles take away from the time available for free play. If bullies and targets are playing less, then they may acquire fewer of the benefits of play, such as rehearsal and skills acquisition. Instead, they are replaying preexisting roles. It would be an important addition to the research into children's play to characterize the dynamic flow of power relations within free play situations, coding the speech/acts as either instrumental or communicative (consensual) over time.

Instrumental states are not negative in themselves; they are necessary elements of a complex social world. The instrumental actions that constitute bullying, however, involve coercion, manipulation, and humiliation. These behaviors are not adaptive to

success in the lifeworld and do not prepare children for a sufficiently rich variety of adult social roles. Neither the bully nor the target learns effective instrumental leadership strategies through the process of bullying. Bullying, then, is a distorting mechanism that propels children away from consensus and toward coercion. Bully-involved children are less likely to learn effective instrumental techniques, such as allocating tasks and resources to optimum effect and issuing imperatives in respectful and logical ways. Children involved with younger siblings and schoolmates have ample opportunity to use effective instrumental techniques. As has been discussed above, children often act to keep other children safe from cars, strangers, and potentially dangerous adults.

Instrumental action functions to limit choice; it attempts to create predictable and repetitive scenarios; communicative action, on the other hand, maximizes choice. This is an important distinction in that there are many circumstances where choice needs to be limited and others where choice is essential. In complex and dense social environments, such as schools, it is necessary to use power in ways that allow smooth flow of activities that maximizes safety. These are inherent, as Noguera (1995) points out, in the power arrangements of the mass education system.

Power in the social world, from an instrumental action perspective, is exercised primarily to reach a specific goal, usually involving the apportioning of finite resources, where those resources are social or material. The person in power assigns roles and distributes resources. This is as true for complex social organizations as it is for children exercising power in the school environment. It is understandable that children would need to rehearse roles that they see around them and that children exposed to a surfeit of power within their environment might try to exercise power in their own social contexts.

However, for power to be exercised wisely, the person in power needs to have a great deal of information and skill both to determine the circumstances under which power should be exercised and the appropriate ways to apportion resources. A child who bullies may be in the extremely uncomfortable position of trying to apportion resources without the requisite skills set.

For many children, the victim role is stable over time. While some children have short or multiple episodes of being bullied, most children in victim roles, particularly those who have internalized that role, continue to accumulate victim experiences even in discrete and unrelated social environments. A child may reflexively repeat behaviors and signals that trigger bullies and may not have the social skills to join cohorts of children that successfully avoid bullying interactions.

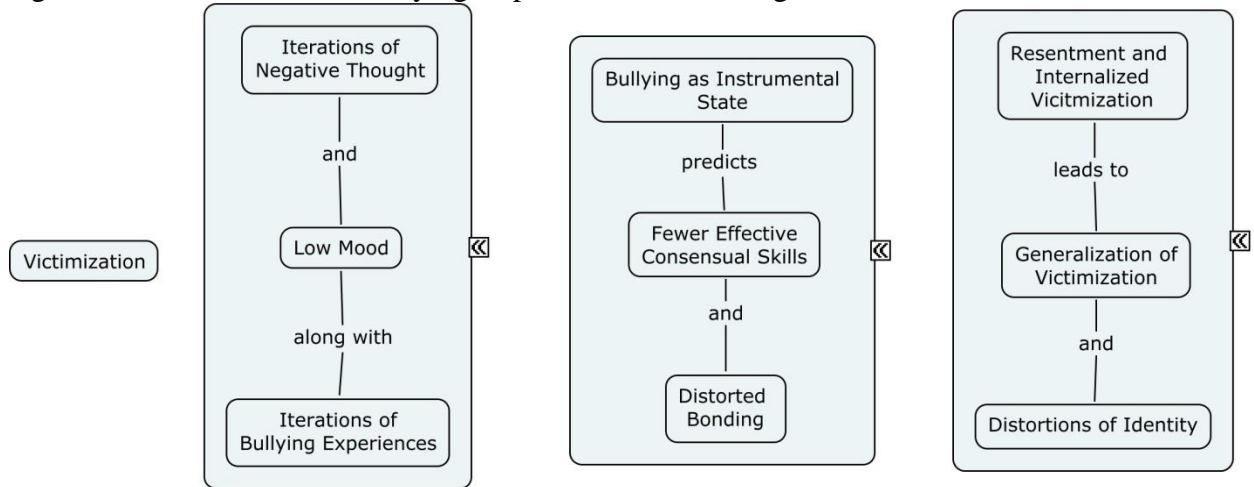
Empirical evidence to support these theorized processes would include:

- direct confirmation of theorized processes such as quantifying the amount of play, observing attempts to influence others consensually – autonomy, validity claims among children, direct measurement of bonding, and direct observation of role rehearsal
- iteration of negative internal cognitive and affective experiences
- distorted identity based on the habitual role of victim
- fewer effective instrumental skills
- tendency for the victim role to become active across geographic contexts

Figure 8 below depicts a model of the active effects of bullying within the theory of communicative action. The first box describes the iterations of bullying experiences including iterations of negative thoughts and moods; the second box shows the instrumental nature of bullying leading to fewer consensual social situations leading to distortions in social bonds. The third box describes the absorption of a victim identity including the generalization of victimization (for some

children) of bullying across social and geographic contexts. The result of this cumulative experience is a distortion of identity.

Figure 8: Active Effects of Bullying Experiences on the Target



The physical symptoms associated with fear and anxiety may start to turn into physical complaints and a child may have more excused and unexcused absences from school. Within the empirical literature on bullying one would expect to see evidence of:

- somatic symptoms
- generalized anxiety (as opposed to fear of just the school environment)
- depression
- low self-worth, low self-esteem, high self-derogation
- externalization such as agg

or school social work, with overt acts of violence that invoke disciplinary and juvenile justice intervention absorbing a great deal of school social workers' limited resources (Allen-Meares et al., 2000).

Bullying prevention has not been part of school social works' mandate because prevention has not been universally accepted as consistent with the traditional mandate of school social work of intervening only where an issue directly affects academic functioning (Miller et al., 2003). Evidence is emerging, however, that bullying does in fact depress academic functioning both for individual children as well as classroom

groups (S. W. Twemlow, 2004; Wentzel & Asher., 1995; Woods & Wolke, 2004); therefore, intervening in bullying should fall within the traditional school social work mandate (Astor, 1998; Mishna, 2003).

A strong case, based on the academic and personal effects of bullying, can be made for an expanded mandate for clinical professions to provide direct services to children and their families within schools affected by bullying, including prevention and primary treatment (Adelman & Taylor, 1998; Frey et al., 2005; SAMSHA, 2003). Such a mandate, however, will require funding for social workers and increased faculty time to implement anti-bullying and social skills building interventions.

Mishna (2003) asserts that social workers are in the best position to provide counseling, consultation, and training for school personnel to deal specifically with school bullying. The social work profession is already established within the host setting of the schools and has a set of conceptual skills with which to analyze multiple social contexts and a set of practical skills with which to intervene to improve the school environment.

Bullying, as a set of oppressive experiences, can be seen as an issue of social justice. Intervening against bullying is consistent with the mandate of critical social work. Critical social work (Fook, 1993; Healy; Ife, 1997) is a dominant paradigm in this writer's native country Canada and shares with Critical Theory an emancipatory mandate that requires taking direct action against oppressive forces and ameliorating the effects of that oppression. Scandinavian anti-bullying initiatives share a similar concern in that reducing bullying is seen as a way to increase social justice by reducing marginalization among adult citizens (Roland, 2000).

Related Issues

Alternative Views of Bullying and Victimization

Most research into bullying is predicated on the assumption that bullying is a malignant phenomenon; however, there is some evidence that some children who make the transition away from the victim role, called “escaped victims”, find that the bullying experience strengthened their character (Dixon et al., 2004; P. K. Smith, L. Talamelli, et al., 2004). Bullying experiences during childhood may lead to the social reproduction of adult roles of submissiveness and domination (Dixon et al., 2004; A. Sutton et al., 1999) which may be seen as a positive or a negative depending on one’s standpoint on roles of social control. One study (S. Brown & Taylor, 2008) shows that adults who were victimized as children are employed in subservient roles more frequently than those who bullied or those who were neither bullies nor victims. Percy-Smith makes the point that systematic abuses of power are endemic to capitalist societies which require people to take roles with varying degrees of coercion.

In contemporary social constructions, bullying is increasingly seen as a problem. Yet a paradox exists in that, for example, the systematic abuse of power has throughout history characterized many processes of social interaction, for instance in the workplace by bosses, teachers in schools or by parents in the home, and continues to do so in some cases (Percy-Smith & Matthews, 2001, p. 51).

Kogan and Chandan (2004) in their qualitative research into school violence found a small number of teachers and parents who expressed opinions in favor of bullying. Most of this small group felt that bullying was an important part of childhood and helped the children become tougher and more prepared for an adult world. One father threatened to hit his child himself if he did not learn to stand up to his tormentor.

No research studies have yet been published that examine the relationship between bullying and adult violence and aggression³⁰; however, the example of Nazi tyranny may extend this notion into the reproduction of coercive and oppressive adult roles. Kamenetsky (1996) shows how bullying was promoted and taught as a way to reproduce adult roles of domination and even cruelty. Bullying among adults in the workplace is another emerging topic of research (Cowie et al., 2002; Hoel et al., 1999; P. K. Smith, 1997). However, it is not yet clear that workplace and school bullying are related. Longitudinal studies begun in Scandinavia in the 80s and 90s are just beginning to measure adult roles to determine correlations with childhood experiences of bullying and victimization and their research cohort is just entering the labor market.

Bullying and Social Competence

The systematic review of bullying is intimately entwined with social competence, another fundamental concept in Habermas's theory of communicative action. Social competence is a diffuse concept that comprises a wide range of behaviors. Segrin (2000), in an attempt to capture the common feature of all social skills, defines social competence as the ability to interact in a way that is appropriate and effective. Within the empirical literature social competence – or social skills- are measured in several ways including the number of reciprocated friendships, subjective measures of the quality of the child's interaction, the ability to negotiate, sense of humor, perceived attachment to among others.

³⁰ There has been a longitudinal study that has followed Norwegian children into young adulthood.

Definitions and Methodology in Bullying Research

Despite the fact that bullying has been the subject of research for 30 years, bullying researchers have not yet coordinated definitions or methodology. To date, there have been no international conventions of leading researchers and no attempts to develop conventions that would allow studies to build logically on one another. The result of this lack of coordinated activity is a very confusing picture of bullying and its effects.

With governments and states implementing policy and laws against bullying (Limber & Small, 2003) intervention programs are proliferating (Limper, 2000; McGrath, 2007; Scaglione & Scaglione, 2006); however, there is scant evidence for the effectiveness of these programs (Rigby, 2002a, 2003; J. D. Smith et al., 2004; P. K. Smith, D. J. Pepler, et al., 2004; Stevens et al., 2000). Three meta-analytic studies concluded that there is no evidence to show that any bullying intervention program has been effective and there is even some evidence that certain interventions may actually increase bullying (D.J. Pepler et al., 1994; Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). By contrast, there is evidence that violence, as disaggregated from bullying, can be both prevented and reduced (Mytton et al., 2006): this leads to the conclusion that bullying is an intransigent and far more damaging subset of aggression.

Dubin (1978) suggests that interventions in the applied sciences are unlikely to succeed when there is no adequate theoretical explanation for the underlying phenomenon. This appears to be the case with bullying. Many programs are created with little or no reference to any supporting scientific literature (Stassen Berger, 2007). None of the theoretical models currently used in the bullying literature explicitly consider the dynamics and effects of power abuse; yet, power abuse is the single variable that

distinguishes bullying from other forms of aggression. Imbalance of power clearly needs to be a significant feature of a theory that explains the bullying phenomenon and form the basis of effective intervention to improve outcomes for children involved in bullying.

PART V SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

In this section, the systemic review will be discussed including a discussion of the data collection and data analysis methods employed. The results will be reviewed and related to the theory discussed above.

DATA COLLECTION

This section will elaborate the tools employed for gathering data and how these data will advance the understanding of the effects of school bullying. The systematic review of bullying will be a process of isolating the variables used in the existing literature as well as the results found. Data were gathered on the measures and results on the selected literature and as well as on the claims and theoretical assumptions being made by the researchers who conducted the studies.

Inclusion Criteria

The following is an outline of the strategy used for identification of appropriate studies and articles in the bullying literature. This is the American sub-set of the literature reviewed above and includes articles from US databases. Specific information on the databases used are identified in Appendix I. All studies that met the requirement were included. The inclusion criteria can be summarized as follows:

- quantitative research conducted in the US
- studies published in juried journals, or books by established experts (whose research substantially appears in juried journals)
- studies that measure the correlation between victimization and at least one effect variable
- studies that measure bullying and its effects either contemporaneous or within a three year period for longitudinal studies (where the data from longitudinal studies are presented according to different time spans one year will be the preferred span)

- study whose results were in a form that could be converted to a common effect size metric either a “Cohen’s d ”, correlation effect size; a “Pearson’s r ” effect size.
- studies with an “Odds Ratio” effect size will be included as most studies of suicide use this metric and is, theoretically possible to convert it to a continuous metric such as an r or d
- studies whose sample included children and adolescents representing the characteristics of the general population (since there is no significant difference between economic status and ethnicity in bullying prevalence studies whose samples came from minority communities were included)
- studies whose sample included children and adolescents of both genders

The decision to include longitudinal and cross-sectional studies was made based on convenience in that there would not be enough studies in this review if one or the other sets were eliminated. As well, both types of studies will capture a somewhat different peer context: longitudinal studies will capture more of the effects of longer-term victimization while contemporaneous studies will emphasize the immediate effects of bullying. Since the goal of the study is to determine the range and type of effects the contextual factors are less important. Where possible, the time comparisons will be limited to one year or less in longitudinal studies due to the fact that children who are no longer being victimized will begin forgetting their experience (this is the same reason that all retrospective studies were excluded).

Exclusion Criteria

Studies will be excluded for the following reasons:

- the definitions of bullying used were out-of-date (some researchers still conflate bullying with other forms of aggression)
- studies that measure effects without measuring bullying
- retrospective studies that measure bullying that occurred more than three years in the past
- studies that reported only statistically significant results excluding the results of measurements taken (in these cases an attempt was made to obtain these data directly from the authors).

A number of studies were excluded because they lacked data that would make it possible to convert to a standard effect size. In one case the means were presented in graphic form without either the SDs, standard deviations, or the number of subjects in the comparison groups. (Cohen's *d* or Pearson's *r* can be calculated with the mean, standard deviation and *N*).

Another set of excellent studies developing more complex models of the effects of bullying were excluded because they did not provide correlation data. In studies that present regression or path analyses the correlations could not be extrapolated from the data presented. Several studies reported the results of latent class analyses or structural equation modeling; such studies were included as long as the correlation data were also included (authors of studies that lacked these data were contacted but were not able to provide the correlation data).

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Quantitative data were collected in a Microsoft Access database designed specifically for this project. Textual data on the theory used in the study were tabulated in a word processor as, likely due to the limited space in journals, very few studies related their results to a comprehensive social theory. The database used to collect data will be discussed below.

Quantitative Database

The following data was gathered in a Microsoft Access database specifically designed for this project:

- the theories informing the studies as described in Table 2 (where these are made explicit)
- the actual measures used

- any established statistical validity of the measures cited
- operational definitions,
- the sample characteristics and size (N)
- the results of individual studies in whatever metric was used

Protection of Human Subjects

The project has been subject to review by the Hunter College Institutional Review Board and data was gathered under the protocol #HC-11091453. The project did not gather data directly from human subjects but from secondary sources and is considered to be exempt research under category (45 CFR 46.101b):

Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Data Management and Storage

Since the data collected are considered exempt from human subject protection concerns due to their lack of identifying information secure storage is not an issue. No data containing identifying information, such as survey data with identifying material, was used in this study.

Reliability and Validity

Since the unit of observation for this meta-analysis is the individual study, issues of reliability and validity have been dealt with by each set of authors. Reliability is the consistency of a measurement item or instrument to produce similar results in different contexts; validity is the ability of a measure to accurately represent a particular construct (Yang, 2002). In several studies existing measures were used whose validity and

reliability of the instrument had already been established. In other cases the authors of the selected studies borrowed and adapted items from existing measures. In only a few cases did the authors develop original measures for their study; and in these cases the items were not substantially different than those items from established studies.

DATA ANALYSIS

A single question is being asked of each level of data: what are the proposed or implied mechanisms that link the actions of bullies to the effects on bullying? This question is asked at different levels of conceptualization from the level of theoretical and conceptual analysis to the empirical level at which research has been performed.

In this section, the analysis techniques to be used will be described, beginning with the analysis of the theoretical data, the qualitative data and the theory of communicative action.

Analysis of Concepts and the Formation of a Typology

The purpose of any analysis of multiple studies, as Yang (2002) points out, "is to synthesize and organize the existing empirical findings into a coherent pattern...and to seek general conclusions across studies" (p. 297). This review takes all the measurements and attempts to find the commonalities and differences in order to begin to build a model that can explain the effects of victimization as they pertain to the dynamics and nature of bullying.

To accomplish this using existing literature as a starting point the first order of business is to bring some clarity to the many disparate concepts used in the selected review. Some concepts are similar. While the statistical possibilities of this review are limited, using the typological method (Hegar & Yungman, 1989; Lazarsfeld, 1937;

Lehnert, 2007; J.C. McKinney & Kerckhoff, 1962), it is possible to determine the consistency of concepts, variables and propositions inherent in the empirical studies with the theoretical framework and to begin the process of determining a coherent model of the mechanism of effect.

The different concepts used for the variables measured were classified and categorized according to their qualities. The variables were classified was rated by four independent raters to establish consistency and reliability. Each rater was given a list of all the variables as they were termed by the authors themselves and were asked to put them into logical categories. The classified variables were be turned into typological categories based on shared features and, where feasible, consistency with the communicative conceptual frame. For example, all the measures of self-esteem, self-worth, self-derogation and self-derogation were categorized into a cognitive typological category and all mood related process were put into an affective category.

Temporal considerations were added since none of the raters used spatial or temporal considerations in their ratings. As will be seen below, fears and avoidant behaviors that were specifically related to school were put into a spatial category and repetitive cognitive and effective processes were put into temporal categories. These considerations were considered to have face validity and not be open to interpretations. These considerations will be important to the development of a theoretical model of bullying as a life process (George & Gareth, 2000).

As was discussed in the analysis section, a plan had been put in place to use qualitative methods and a qualitative software program to gather, code and analyze a great deal of textual content to determine stated and implicit theory. In reality the selected

studies were very thin on theory to explain bullying and negligible in explaining the effects of bullying and could be collected almost verbatim in a few pages of prose.

In the following section the choice and rationale for the use of the vote-counting statistical technique will be discussed.

Statistical Analysis of Results

The statistical technique that will be used in this systematic review is an informal method of comparison called vote counting (Bangert-Drowns, 1986). In this sub-section the rationale for that choice will be re-iterated, other statistical techniques that were considered will be described, and the vote-counting technique explained.

Due to the variation in measures, also called the “shared method variance” (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Haynes & Hayes O'Brien, 2000) used for both victimization and all the effects outcomes several statistical methods were eliminated. For example, such statistical analyses as measuring the homogeneity of results, the degree to which the results of separate studies of the same phenomenon appear to be consistent, and changing the power of the result as according to the cumulative sample (Glass, McGaw, & Smith, 1981) are not feasible due to the lack of homogeneity of method and measures. In this systematic review that cumulative sample size is over 90,000 so that, if traditional meta-analytic techniques were possible, the statistical power would be increased exponentially. Typically this kind of meta-analysis is done on studies that were conducted using the same measures and under similar conditions making the results more easily compared.

The results of the separate studies selected for review are presented in different effect size metrics. An effect size metric is simply the choice of a statistical metric that is used to compare the degree and strength of an association between two variables. The

selected studies depicted their results using different effect size metrics, the most common being the Pearson's r . Other studies compared the means between comparison groups, used chi square comparisons or Odds Ratios (the standard technique in suicide studies). "Pearson's r " correlation coefficient, the most commonly used metric, measures the degree to which two continuous variables correlate; "Cohen's d " measures the degree to which the standard deviation of two continuous variables differs; and an "Odds Ratio" measures the correlation of dichotomous variable in terms of a numeric ratio, as in a horse race. (A continuous measure allows a range of scores between whole numbers as in scales; dichotomous effect sizes measure exclusive, either/or, categories that do not allow scaling: in the case of suicide ultimately the dichotomous choice is between alive or dead or an attempt to take one's own life or no attempt.) A few selected studies presented descriptive statistics only and were included if they presented sufficient data for conversion to a common metric; specifically, the means, the number of subjects in each comparison group, and the standard deviations of the scores.

In order to make it possible to compare results, each discrete result of all the studies was converted to a common metric, Cohen's d . An exception was made to include studies using Odds Ratios for which data conversion is not feasible: this exception was made so that suicide studies could be included in this review. An on-line effect size calculator was used to convert the data into Cohen's d (Lyons & Morris, 2010).

The "Cohen's d " effect size was chosen because this metric allows easier visual comparison than other measures of effect size. It is a 3 decimal point metric that has a range of plus or minus 3, representing the convention of 3 standard deviation measures above or below a mean, By contrast, while Pearsons r varies between -1 to + 1 with one

being an absolute correlation. The Odds Ratio metric is a far more unwieldy measure of effect size; it presents effect sizes as a ratio, a confidence interval – an upper and lower range of likelihood that a particular score will fall within that range (Hopkins, 2001). For example, Brunstein (2008) shows that victimized girls are at higher risk for suicidal ideation measured as 27.38/1 ratio with a lower limit of 8.93/1 and an upper limit of 83.53/1 95% of the time. This is represented as 27.38 (8.98-83.53) 95%: an unwieldy metric for comparing several effect sizes.

Studies using Odds Ratios were included in this review in order to include suicide in the model of effects. As is standard in suicide research all but one study measuring suicide used the Odds Ratio metric. Odds Ratios can also be converted to r and d if the standard deviations are known (Chinn, 2000). In fact, Cohen's d and Pearson's r effect sizes can also be converted into Odds Ratios. This was not done as the Odds Ratio is such an inefficient metric for the purpose of comparing effect sizes visually: they are not as easily to compare as they use more space; and almost no suicide studies provided the standard deviations necessary to convert the odds ratio to Pearson's r .

Where possible the direction of effect sizes was changed to further assist comparison. The direction of a measure shows the presence or absence of a particular quality in the form of a plus or minus (+ -). For example, a measure of self-derogation was changed to a negative direction and included with studies of self-esteem and self-worth which were determined to be essentially measuring the same cognitive process (see the following section). In a similar way peer acceptance, a positive direction, was changed to a negative direction in order to be included with measures of peer rejection.

A visual inspection of these scores will determine the consistency of results in terms of direction and strength, and allow for the identification of outliers, scores that are radically different from others in a set. An unweighted mean score will be created by averaging the scores in each dimension. An unweighted mean is calculated by adding the scores and dividing by the number of scores; a weighted mean would take into account the size of the sample and other considerations such as the measures used: weighting is being avoided again due to the lack of homogeneity between studies. As will be evident below the homogeneity and consistency of some results such as those for loneliness and self-esteem can easily be seen using this informal method.

In a very small number of cases results that authors considered to be non-significant were turned into significant results. This was only done when the studies being compared showed low levels of shared method variance (where variables were measured in similar ways) and when the particular non-significant score fell within a range of significant scores. In all cases the smaller but significant correlation came from a study with a larger sample than the one with higher correlation and non-significant result. This was not done in cases where there was high shared method variance since the non-significant result may have been measuring an unrelated phenomenon.

The original studies collected data on several different factors. Some presented data on gender, others distinguished between scores and data collected from different informants such as peers, teachers and parents. For this study none of these distinguishing factors were retained as the fundamental similarity between genders and between raters has been amply established in previous research (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; O'Connell et

al., 1999) . Hawker and Boulton (2000) distinguished between informants in their meta-analysis and found only marginal differences between results.

The only distinguishing factor of the sample that has been maintained has been the general age of the subjects of the study. These have been grouped into two groups designated L for early school and U for later school. (Middle school children are often included in samples of high and elementary school student and therefore span both categories.)

Results will be presented in three ways. The range of scores for each dimension will be presented; the unweighted average of scores will be presented; and, for dimensions with 2 results from at least 2 studies or 3 or more discrete results, the unweighted mean scores for the two age cohorts will be presented. This will allow the reader to determine whether the scores appear consistent and whether there is a change between lower and upper school ages.

The acuity of the victimization measures was collected but did not play a significant role in the data analysis. The vote-counting method was used to show that low acuity studies were more likely to produce insignificant or less significant results. Future detailed statistical exploration would need to be done to develop a system for weighting the results to compensate for the lack of instrumental acuity but that would require a larger number of studies where other variables were measured using the same methods.

The vote-counting method chosen for this review is sufficient for an early exploration of the typology in that an informal analysis of the results as they are aggregated into typological category would be able to rule out the salience of the

category. Vote-counting meta-analysis can identify outliers, and determine whether all or most findings are significant and in the same direction (Bangert-Drowns, 1986).

A table for each dimension will show the range of results, the percentage of results deemed significant, the mean unweighted result, and, where possible, the means of the scores for the lower and upper grades. Several sets of scores showed 100% significance which is an indication that all studies measuring a particular variable showed a significant correlation; the range of scores indicates the relative strengths of the associations, and the mean shows the cumulative average of scores.

Drawbacks of the Method

The methodology has a few drawbacks. The most significant obstacle is that the research is constrained by the data available in existing studies. Variables for which no research has been conducted, such as the play behavior of bully-involved children or the state of their social and emotional bonds, cannot be directly measured using this approach. Another problem is the limitations inherent in using aggregate scores as opposed to individual scores: since the unit of analysis in a systematic review is the individual study rather than the individual children that are the subjects of the studies it is possible that some results can show relationships that exist solely between studies rather than in a human population: regression analysis to determine the relationship between and among different variables is not possible as the individual scores are not available.

The choice of US studies results in the exclusion of several Commonwealth and European studies both of which have longer and better-funding bullying research projects including longitudinal studies that have followed groups of children into young

adulthood. Some effects such as the physical and post-traumatic stress symptoms are researched in greater depths outside the US.

Another drawback is publication bias which manifests as both a tendency to accept data only from certain sanctioned sources, ignoring “grey” data, data which does not have official approval, and a tendency to under-represent non-significant results (Rothstein, Sutton, & Borenstein, 2005). In the case of the bullying literature, there does not appear to be a large body of grey data in that most published material on the web or in non-scholarly books are oriented toward supporting victims rather than quantifying the bullying phenomenon and its effects. The potential bias against non-significant results may be mitigated by that fact that many studies present data on effects that are not necessarily the main focus of the research. The results of this systematic review will need to be tested with a real population before the results can be shown to be generalizable.

Another difficulty is the vulnerability that meta-analyses have to research bias (Slavin, 1995). Slavin (1995) makes the point that virtually all study criteria and effect size measures are incomplete and that the only way to handle bias is to be as overt as possible about the choices made. In this case, bias is avoided by including all studies that meet the inclusion criteria.

In the following sections the systematic review will be described and the results analyzed. The concepts inherent in the studies will be organized and categorized using multiple raters to see the fit with theory.

Part VI Systematic Review Results

Thirty-eight research articles comprising 39 separate studies met the criteria for inclusion in this review. Table 5 shows the authors, the variables measured (represented as dimension, which will be more fully elaborated below), the number of subjects, and the age group of the samples.

The total number of subjects in the review is 92,179 and the ages of the sample span the stages of childhood but, due to the variation in ages, were coded into groups: L – lower age, U – upper age, and A – all ages. Middle and junior high school children were part of the younger end of studies of high school students and at the older end of studies of elementary students; therefore, most of the studies designated with an L or U actually included a considerable middle school cohort. A few studies limited their sample to that middle group and were included in the older category.

Table 5: Studies Selected for Review

#	Study Authors	Outcomes Measured (organized by dimension)	N	Age Group
1	Adelmann (2005)	aggression, physical, social, substance use, suicide	50148	L
2	Berthold & Hoover (2000)	academic, aggression, anxiety, cognitive, mood, spatial	591	L
3	Boulton (1999)	play, social	89	L
4	Brunstein Klomak (2008)	mood, suicide	2342	U
5	Buhs & Ladd (2001)	academic, behavior, social, spatial	399	L
6	Buhs, Ladd & Herald (2006)	academic, aggression, social (table 5 continued on next page)	380	L

7	Cleary (2000)	suicide	1569	U
8	Cunningham (2007)	aggression, bonding, bullying behaviors, school norms	517	U
9	Egan & Perry (1998)	cognitive, externalization, internalization, physical, social (competence)	189	L
(Table 5 continued on the next page)				
10	Finkelhor, Ormrod & Turner (2007a)	aggression, anxiety, mood	2030	All
11	Finkelhor, Ormrod & Turner (2007b)	symptoms of traumatic stress	*	All
12	Finnegan, Hodges & Perry (1998)	aggression, anxiety, behavior, cognitive	184	U
13	Glew et al. (2008)	academic, aggression, mood, social, spatial	5391	U
14	Graham & Juvonen (1998)	anxiety, cognitive, social	418	U
15	Grills & Ollendick (2002)	anxiety, cognitive	279	U
16	Hanish & Guerra (2000)	aggression, social	1199	L
17	Hodges & Perry (1999)	externalization, internalization, physical, prosocial, social	173	L
18	Hodges, Malone, Perry (1997)	externalization, internalization, physical	229	L
19	Juvonen, Nishina & Graham (2000)	academic, cognitive, mood, social	243	U
21	Kochenderfer-Ladd, & Skinner (2002)	externalization, internalization, social	388	L
22	Ladd & Burgess (2001)	aggression, bonding, social, spatial (table 5 continued on next page)	396	L

23	Ladd, Kochenderfer & Coleman (1997)	academic, bonding, social, spatial	200	L
24	Lopez & DuBois (2005)	academic, behavioral, cognitive, mood, social (Table 5 continued on the next page)	508	U
25	Morrow, Hubbard, Rubin & McAuliffe (2008)	aggression, mood, social	533	L
26	Mouttapa et al. (2004)	Social	1368	U
27	Nansel et al. (2003)	Aggression	15686	A
28	Nishina, Juvonen & Witkow (2005)	academic, anxiety, cognitive, mood, physical, social	1526	U
29	Nylund, Nishina, Bellmore & Graham (2007)	mood, spatial (Table 5 continued on the next page)	2307	U
30	Paquette & Underwood (1999)	cognitive, social	76	U
31	Pellegrini, Bartini & Brooks (1999)	aggression, dominance, mood, physical, social	154	U
32	Peskin et al. (2007)	Internalization	1303	U
33	Schwartz et al. (2005)	academic, cognitive, mood, social (and social competence)	199	L
34	Schwartz et al	Study 1: academic, aggression, social	*	L
35	(2008)	Study 2: academic, aggression, social	n/a 310	
36	Seals & Young (2003)	cognitive, mood	454	U
37	Srabstein et al. (2006)	anxiety, mood, physical	*n/a	A
38	Storch & Esposito	PTSD (table 5 continued on next page)	201	U

 (2003)

Totals

92,179 *

* The number of subjects is not included in this list for the following reasons: Finkelhor 2007 and 2007 b report data on the same sample; Study 1 of Schwartz 2008 appears to use the same sample as Schwartz, 2005 as the number, mean age and gender proportion are identical; Srabstein et al., 2006 reports data from the same group as Nansel, 2003.

Prevalence

In this systematic review the reported prevalence rates of victimization vary between 9% and 35%. Only 15 studies presented prevalence data in the form of a percentage; the rest of the studies presented the prevalence data in terms of the scores on victimization scales from which the percentage could not be inferred³¹. Victimization was measured using several types of techniques: the most common technique was peer and self-nominations in which the children themselves identified those among them who had been victimized; standard instruments were also common (B. J. Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997; Neary & Joseph, 1994; Olweus, 1996) as were original instruments whose items were substantially the same as those from standardized scales. All victimization questionnaires and the textual preambles that frequently accompany them include such the major features of the bullying phenomenon such as a perceived imbalance of power, direct and indirect forms, and attacks on social status.

One of the major sources of shared method variance, inconsistency in method, in the measures of prevalence is the variation in the temporal aspects of the individual study design. Some studies asked about the occurrence of bullying as far back as three years; other studies used a contemporaneous criterion such as acts of bullying observed and

³¹ Requests were sent to several authors for the prevalence rates or the data from which those rates could be extrapolated.

videotaped. Studies that showed prevalence rates as high as 35% are likely to include a significant number of children who successfully negotiated their encounters with bullies and may be correspondingly less symptomatic: that cohort of former victims would likely show lower rates of anxiety and depression. Despite the fact that repetition, the other temporal aspect of bullying, is now a universal part of the definition of bullying, the authors of the selected studies neglected to provide information on how and whether repetition was measured—in other words, none of the authors specified whether and to what degree the bullying repeated over time.

In an effort to minimize statistical error, methods for determining the status of victim within the studies reviewed were categorized as high and low acuity. Low acuity measures were most frequently used in large scale studies such as those conducted by Nishina (2005) and Adelman (2005) and were usually comprised of four or less items to determine victimization. High acuity measures require significant researcher time and were more common in smaller scale studies; they used elaborate surveys, in-depth interviews, or detailed observations as well as peer, and self-nomination techniques in which interviewers asked children to sort photographs of their peers to identify those among them whom they perceived as being victimized.

The wide variation in prevalence of bullying among the studies does not appear to be uniquely the result of differences in the measures employed. Studies that used similar methods and instruments still yielded different prevalence rates among the different samples. As has been noted by earlier researchers (Boulton, 1991; Sharp et al., 2000), local factors appear to account for a large part of the variance in prevalence rates. Other factors may be at play for which there is no data; for example, some school subcultures

may make it less or more likely that a child would be willing to nominate a peer or themselves as a victim. It is possible that in schools in which administrators or teachers abuse their own power by hitting or humiliating children (Omigbodun et al., 2008) there may be *conspiracies of silence*, cultural prohibitions against discussing adult abusive behaviors, that extend to children; in such environments the prevalence rates may appear lower.

Theories and Claims

This writer's assumption that there was little or no theory underpinning the studies was borne out by the literature review. However, the assumption that the claims supporting the studies would be largely based on the victims' risk for perpetrating future violence was not borne out. While that impression was the result of reading dozens of articles published in the US, many of which were indirectly or directly advocating for resources and policy changes; researchers did not tend to make claims that went far beyond the parameters of their own projects: the claims on which the studies were predicated largely reflected the variables being examined and were generally concerned with the well-being of the victimized children. Researchers did not base their claims on the fear that the victims of bullies would become violent young adults themselves.

Only four studies provided any theoretical framework for their research; yet, none provided a theory that explained the mechanism of effect of bullying *per se* with the exception of Cunningham (2007) which used Catalano's social development theory. This theory resembles Habermas's theory of communicative action in its emphasis on the importance of social skills and social connectedness and the idea that diminishing a child's social world will result in problems with development.

None of the authors predicated their research on the strengths perspective but rather looked for negative sequelae of the victim experience. The embedded assumption common to all the selected studies was that bullying was a problem requiring eradication. None of the authors attempted to discover any positive aspects of the phenomenon nor did they seek to elicit the opinions of adults or children who support or justify bullying. The results of the studies, however, show little evidence for a positive effect of victimization, although it can be assumed that there are cohorts of children among the samples studied who were victimized but did not experience ill effects, and possibly a cohort of children for whom escaping bullying was associated with positive effects (these will be discussed below as possible sources of statistical error).

As will be discussed below, Habermas's theory of communicative action predicts that some of the worst effects of bullying would come from its ability to separate the target child from sources of comfort, support, and autonomous growth.

The Results of the Studies

All the results were turned into the covariation metric – Cohen's d , aside from those presented as Odds Ratios, and all but one of the significant results were in the expected direction. As has been discussed, the methodological variation among studies makes it difficult to compare the effects sizes since the research design and operational definitions are so different between studies. These results will be described below and are shown in a set of tables.

Measurements of Instrument Acuity

The idea that lower acuity victimization instruments would result in lower levels of significance in outcome measurements was only marginally borne out by the data.

58% of results from studies using lower acuity instruments bore significant results versus 68% for studies using higher acuity instruments. This 10% difference was not sufficiently large to justify adjusting the significance levels within this review.

The Organization of Variables

The 39 studies included in this review measured the correlations between victimization by peers and a total of 236 separate outcomes. These measurements ranged from single items that indicated the presence of a single discrete effect, such as the endorsement of the item “I feel sad most days”, considered to be an indicator of depression (Glew et al. 2005), to the individual score of internalization on a complex scale such as the Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist, a multifaceted, multi-item instrument that includes indicators of symptoms of both depression and anxiety (Hodges & Perry, 1999). These 236 outcome variables have been divided into eight categories based on the general topic investigated. In this section these measures and the logic of their categorization into typological dimensions will be discussed.

To make sure that this writer was not imposing an organization onto the variables that was influenced by his theoretical readings, independent raters were recruited. Four independent raters were given the list of variables in the form of the actual concepts used by the study authors. Raters were asked to put these variables into categories that intuitively or logically fit together. While none of the raters considered temporal or spatial features in their categories, there was almost complete agreement among the raters about the nature of the variables³². These categories are summarized in Table 6.

³² Areas of disagreement were explained by difference of interpretation. For example, one rater put almost all social variables into cognitive and affective categories. When asked, that rater explained that this was because of the emotional and cognitive effects of social dimensions such as loneliness and isolation.

Table 6: Typology of Variables

Latent Variable	Processes	Effects related to Bullying
Spatial	Contemporaneous Limitation of Autonomy, decrease in safety	Limitation of space, anxiety including incipient agora- and xenophobia, limitation (thinness) of experience
Physical/Temporal	Contemporaneous Effects, Precursors to longer term effects	Anxiety and physical symptoms including sleep and eating disorders, lack of exercise, biological requirement for social interaction,
Play	Limitation of Play as a Stand-in Communicative Action	Limitation of communicative processes including support and unstructured thinking.
Affective-Temporal	Continuing and repetitive mood states	Development of depression/phobias, development of distorted emotional and cognitive processes, possible self-medication
Cognitive-Temporal	Repetition of negative self talk	Development of distorted cognitive processes. A worldview colored by negative experiences,
Social	Narrowing of skills and role acquisition	Narrowing of social world. Overemphasis of instrumental.
Behavioral	Distortion or production of problematic behaviors	Physical manifestations such as self- and –other harming
*Suicide	Distortion of behavioral as above	Self-harming

*Suicide was included as a separate category despite the fact that it fits the typology of a behavioral effect. This was done because of two reasons: the behavior is so dangerous that it merits its own category, and the Odds Ratio metric is unique and difficult to compare to other metrics.

In the following sections these typological categories more fully explored.

Typologies Derived from the Review

Table 7 shows these dimensions ranked according to the variables by which they were measure.. For example, measurements of social consequences of bullying, the most frequently measured category, appeared as 63 separate measures in 21 of the 38 studies; only one study directly measured play although information about play can be extrapolated from other measures of activity and isolation.

Table 7: Variables Measured within Typological Dimensions

Typological Dimensions

Social

Loneliness
 Social Competence
 Social Connectedness
 Bonding

Play and Activity (related to the
 Social but a separate dimension)

Affective and Cognitive Temporal

Depression
 Anhedonia
 Anxiety
 Internalization

Cognitive

Self-Esteem
 Self-Blame

Behavioral

Aggression
 Aggressive Friends
 Conduct
 Dominance
 Externalization
 Substance Abuse

Academic

Attendance
 Test Scores and GPA
 (Table continues..)
 Classroom Participation
 School Liking
 School is Hard
 Academic Problems

Physical Symptoms (various)

Suicide
 Spatial
 Feeling Unsafe in School
 School Avoidance

PTSD

The various methods used to determine the effects of bullying correspond to various levels of visibility. For example, some of the data on play and social connections

were done through observation, as were some of the measures of bullying and other behavior measurements. Subjective states were measured largely using perturbative techniques, the measurement of visible reactions to latent or theorized phenomena through interviews or instruments such as the items on symptoms of depression and anxiety. Bullying and other complex phenomena tend to be hidden from adult eyes and are only made visible when they are labeled and become subject to general attention.

Each of the dimension in Table 7 will be discussed separately below beginning with the spatial effects.

Spatial

Five studies measured the degree to which victimized children find their school environment aversive. While these items measured fear and insecurity and were placed with other measures of anxiety by all the independent raters, the decision was made to disaggregate them from anxiety because they related specifically to the school environment.

Table 8: Results from Spatial Dimension

Variable	% Significant	Range of Scores and Mean	Means for Upper and Lower Grades
Feel Unsafe at School	100%	0.3504 to 0.4706 0.4347	n/a no upper grade data
School Avoidance	100%	0.2417 to 0.4945 One Odds Ratio: 2.0 (1.6 - 2.6) 0.3744	n/a “

Anxiety in the face of a genuine threat is a rational reaction and a separate phenomenon from generalized anxiety which would be present even in the absence of aversive stimulus. The studies measured the children’s perception of safety in their school as well as the desire to avoid the school (Berthold & Hoover, 2000; Buhs & Ladd, 2001; Buhs et

al., 2006; Glew et al., 2008; B. J. Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002). Feeling unsafe at school was measured using four separate but similar scales with only one measurement using the same scale; all but one scale were measures of school adjustment and one scale measured social anxiety and included a subscale for social anxiety. School avoidance was measured by two separate school adjustment scales.

The results show a high degree of consistency between studies in that all studies showed significant results in the same direction. All the studies were done at the lower grades so no data were available on the safety of older children. As would be consistent with the age of the children studies the feeling of lack of safety was higher than their level of school avoidance: smaller children are not as free as older children to avoid school. In the next section, however, it will be seen that these children also experience a number of aversive physical symptoms that may be directly related to their fear of going to school.

While none of the authors theorized about the spatial characteristics of the bullying phenomenon, the seven studies provided measurements that demonstrate that victims do in fact experience a narrowing of safe physical space at significant rates. It is conceivable that being afraid of the school environment will turn out to be an effective indicator of bullying, particularly for younger children who may not yet have formed a concept of bullying and are not as able as older children to miss school. In other words, by simply surveying children on their level of fear in school as well as perhaps, their loneliness, educators and social workers can identify children who are being bullied or are at risk.

Physical Dimension

The two selected studies that measured physical effects looked at a large variety of effects, although with very little duplication among studies. These included: stomach ache, dizziness, backache, headache, and obesity; as well as general morbidity (scores on standardized scales of physical symptoms). Three instruments were used to measure the physical effects of bullying: the HBSC, Health Behavior in School-aged Children (WHO, 2009), the Minnesota Student Survey (Minnesota Department of Children Families & Learning, 2001) and one original instrument; one instrument was used to measure physical strength, a sub-scale of the Peer Nomination Inventory (Wiggins & Wender, 1961). The HBSC includes an aggregate score of the degree of morbidity depending on the number of different symptoms as well as the perceived severity of the symptom.

Table 9: Results from the Physical Dimension

Variable	% Significant	Range of Scores and Mean	Means for Upper and Lower Grades
Physical Strength	100%	-0.4084 to 1.1858 -0.7843	n/a no upper grade data
Backache	single result significant	1.58 (1.10-2.54)	“
Dizziness	“	1.46 (1.07-1.99)	“
Headache	“	1.70 (1.20 – 2.40)	“
Obesity	“	2.4047	“
Severe Morbidity	“	3.56 (2.46-5.15)	“
Stomach Ache	“	1.76 (1.22-2.54)	“
Nutritional Behavior	100%	*0.1001	two upper grade measures

* This result comes from one study using a large sample which explains the significance of this relatively mild correlation

The severe morbidity score requires special attention as it indicates that victimized children are experiencing more than one physical symptom and perceive themselves to be experiencing these symptoms at a more severe level than do their non-bullied peers. The morbidity score is an aggregate score that includes the individual

scores and allowed for a rating of severity. While this single score comes from one study the sample was over 15,000 and the scale used was the World Health Organization Health Behavior in School-children (HBSC) Check List (WHO, 2009) whose reliability and validity have been amply established through very large cross-national studies (Currie et al., 2008).

Obesity was based on a body mass index of the HBSC and the result of over 2.0 is the highest result in this review. The result does not indicate the degree to which obesity was present prior to the bullying. While most of the results of this study were published as Odds Ratios this result was published as means, standard deviations and number of subjects for bullied only and non-bullied comparisons group. As Hopkins (2001) suggests the standard deviations of the two group were averaged when converting to a Cohen's d metric, but this did not substantially lower the covariation.

The high score for obesity compared to non-bullied and bullying groups seems to fly in the face of research that shows obese children at equal risk for both bully and victim roles (Janssen et al., 2004). This result clearly indicates that victimized children have higher body mass but this result is inconsistent with the quite low association within the same large study between poor nutritional choices and victimization: it is hard to understand how the body mass could be so high if the nutritional choices are not terrible unless the increase in body mass were the result of the markedly less activity that victimized children show. This decreased activity will be shown in the play section below.

The fact that all measures of physical strength correlated negatively with victimization is consistent with the definition of bullying itself as an imbalance of power:

a positive result in physical strength would almost certainly obviate any effects result as the score would not likely be for a child who was genuinely victimized according to the traditional definition.

PTSD Trauma Symptoms

Two studies looked at symptoms of trauma in younger children victimized by bullies.

Table 10: PTSD

Variable	% Significant	Range of Scores and Mean	Means for Upper and Lower Grades
PTSD	100%	.588 to .795 0.6724	insufficient for comparison (only one result was from an older cohort)
Spatial	100%	0.2417 to 0.4945 0.4046 (one result was a significant Odds Ratio not included in the mean)	insufficient for comparison (only one result was from an older cohort)

Both studies measuring PTSD used the same measure the Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children, TSCC (Briere, 1996). While all four measures show significant results the range of scores from 0.2417 to .4945 is mild to moderate in significance.

The 100% significant rate of PTSD symptoms, all studies found significant results for these variables, among the exclusively lower grades tested came as a surprise as a UK study of PTSD in older victims of bullying did not show anything like that rate (Mynard, Joseph, et al., 2000). It may be that the trauma of victimization at the hands of peers is significantly lower in cultures that have taken universal stances against bullying as opposed to the US culture which still largely ignores the problem; another explanation of this difference may be that older children have been exposed to bullying both in school and in the media thereby removing the sudden shock dimension of trauma.

The fact that all measures showed a significant result does not indicate that all children who were victimized experienced trauma. It would be important to test an older group and to regress scores to determine co-occurring symptoms among traumatized children over time. It would seem that a cohort of victimized children exhibit symptoms typical of post-traumatic stress including intrusive thoughts about the traumatic event and other symptoms such as irritability and sleeping difficulties. It is clear that many young children experience bullying as a trauma, which is characterized by a sudden change; another group of victimized children may experience damage due to cumulative stress over time and may experience as somewhat different set of symptoms.

Play and Activity

Activity and play behavior were joined into one dimension since much voluntary physical activity involves some form of play, ranging from informal or organized sports to fantasy play with imaginative and creative interaction. Four of the measurements were from observation and two from sub-scale drawn from the Teacher Checklist (Dodge & Coie, 1987) and the Teacher Rating Scale of School Adjustment (Birch & Ladd, 1997). One study, (Boulton, 1999), directly measured play behavior including the size of the playgroup, conversation during play, and solitary play. The results show ample evidence that victimized children play less than their peers. The size of the play network is strongly negatively correlated with victimization; sedentary activity and playing alone is positively correlated.

Table 11: Play and Activity results

Variable	% Significant	Range of Scores and Mean	Means for Upper and Lower Grades
Solitary play	2 scores 100%	0.1250 & 0.1500	n/a no lower grade data
Social Play Group	100%	-1.1240 to -0.4080 mean 0.647	“
Play conversation Activity	2 scores 50% single non-significant result	-0.1001 & 0.8990	n/a

The one significant and positive result that is in an unanticipated direction is play conversation: in this observational study victimized children were found to be significantly more involved in conversation as compared to a non-victimized group. This finding is the single significant anomaly in this review and was recognized as an anomaly by the author (Boulton, 1999). The item was for boys and indicated that they had been observed in conversation at significantly high numbers which is inconsistent with the other very high correlations within that one study for solitary play and very low social play. Boulton suggests that further study is required to determine whether this result indicates a phenomenon that can be generalized or was simple a local phenomenon.

Social

The social dimension is the most frequently investigated outcome of bullying and is comprised of four sub-dimensions: social connectedness, social competence, loneliness, and bonding. Dimensions were organized based on shared features which were clear at face value.

Social connectedness, with 40 outcome measurements, is the most frequently measured social sub-dimension. The Child Behavior Scale (Ladd & Profilet, 1996) was the most frequent measure used in six discrete measurements, five measures were

original to the study, two measurements were made with the Metropolitan Area Child Study survey (Metropolitan Area Child Study Group, 2002); and two were drawn from direct observation of peer interaction. All the variables relate in different ways to the quantity and quality of the victimized child's social life, albeit from different perspectives. Measurements of social connection look at popularity through indicators such as the number of friends, peers' nominations of popularity, and perceptions of social acceptance or rejection.

Measures of social distance were kept in this category but may need to be disaggregated as a separate but related variable in future research: it is possible that some children who are distant and withdrawn may still be considered popular; however, it seems more likely that withdrawal and unpopularity are closely related in most cases. Romantic appeal among a teenage sample was maintained as a separate sub-category with the idea that unpopular children may not be perceived as romantically appealing for reasons of their social status apart from their physical features.

Table 12: Social Results

Variable	% Significant	Range of Scores and Mean	Means for Upper and Lower Grades
Loneliness	100%	0.366 to 1.757 mean with outliers removed .5752	lower grades* .5196 upper grades* .6031
Social Exclusion	87%	0.0801 to 2.075 mean 0.6125 (one significant OR)	lower 0.5984 upper 0.6499
Social Bonding	60%	-1.0361 to -0.1202 mean -0.4336	n/a insufficient data from upper grades
Social Competence	80%	-0.2828 to -0.7717 mean -0.3582	"
Number of Friends	70%	-0.8471 to -0.1403 (one OR) mean -0.3825	lower -0.3596 upper -0.4397
Romantic Appeal	two results 100%	-0.5608 & -0.6992	n/a upper only

*outliers removed

Loneliness is highly correlated with victimization. There were no non-significant results in any of the several studies that measured loneliness. This is likely due to the low method variance as many authors used the same scale (Cassidy & Asher, 1992) or items that are very similar. Loneliness, based on the different means for the two age groups, also shows a moderate increase over time.

Loneliness is the subjective perception of discomfort with one's social situation and differs from other outcome measures in the social dimension in that loneliness is a measurement of an intrapsychic state; this requires a self-report measure of the degree of distress felt about social isolation. Loneliness, because of its subjective nature may not always act as an indicator of actual social isolation: some children may experience loneliness despite a high number of friends and positive social interactions; conversely, some withdrawn and rejected children may not experience social isolation as aversive, preferring solitude or the company of one chosen friend to more expansive social lives. Jobe and colleagues, however, in a study of college students (Jobe & Williams White, 2007) found that adults with autism report high levels of loneliness despite a corresponding aversion to a high stimulus social environment.

Social exclusion also, not surprisingly, comes out high both on the percentage of studies showing significant results and the strength of the correlations for both lower and upper grades. These measures were changed to be uniform in direction as they measured both peer preference and peer rejection. While there appears to be an increase between lower and upper grades the difference is not significant: what can be said is that victimized children are equally excluded throughout their school experience.

Social bonding appears to be similarly compromised by bullying experiences. Four studies measured some form of attachment and commitment which were categorized as bonding, defined as a force or feeling that unites people. These included measures of attachment, commitment, closeness, conflict and school liking drawn from the Teacher Rating of School Adjustment instrument (Birch & Ladd, 1997) and a similar original instrument (Cunningham, 2007) based on Catalano's Social Development theory (2004). The research results show that children who are victimized are also less bonded to others. While only 60% of bonding measures were significant, the size of those effects was quite high. This difference is very likely due to method variance and will require further study. Teacher-student conflict was kept in the social bonding category as it was used as a corollary of teacher-student closeness within Ladd and Burgess's study and the authors proposed it as an indicator of bonding (Ladd & Burgess, 2001): the authors take a nuanced view of conflict and propose that the conflict can be interactional in that it can be the result of social distance and not always or exclusively the cause of social distance³³. Further study would be required to determine whether and to what degree conflict is closely correlated with bonding or an unrelated phenomenon.

Five studies looked at social competence or its negative – social ineffectiveness and interpersonal problems. Three scales: the Social Behavior Rating Scale (Schwartz, Farver, Chang, & Lee-Shim, 2002), the Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1999) and the Self-Report Coping Scale (Causey & Dubow, 1992) were used in all 14 measurements giving the results a fair degree of method consistency.

³³ Ladd and Burgess (2001) suggest that conflict arise in the vacuum that is created when there is social distance.

Measuring social competence in children of different ages is difficult as social competence is not a static phenomenon, changing over developmental stages. Social competence, like intelligence, develops throughout childhood: a child entering Kindergarten with low social skills is at risk for victimization (B.J. Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996) but a child with adequate social skills who is targeted by bullies may have fewer opportunities to learn the more advanced social skills in a non-coercive environment and may quickly fall behind in her social development.

Several measures looked at the numbers of friendships or the size of the social group of victimized children, the vast majority using similar peer nomination methods in which children identify peers and rate or describe their friendships. The aggregated results show that victimized children tend to be more socially isolated at all ages. The studies measured the size of friendship groups as well as the number of best friends. While there was a 30% rate of non-significant result there was no result in the contrary direction: no study showed that victimized children had the same or higher numbers of friends compared to non-victimized children. The mean for the upper grades was somewhat higher indicating that social exclusion may worsen over time.

The self-perception of romantic appeal among older grades was also significant with a high negative correlation with victimization. This is taken from a sub-scale of the Social Experience Questionnaire (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996). This negative perception process indicates hopelessness for future social relationships and should be checked to see if it correlates with depression and suicide in a larger sample. While the victimized sample is shown to be physically less strong than its non-victimized cohort many of these children may possess physically attractive features. It is interesting that the two measures,

which were separated by gender, are substantially the same because it would be expected that the lack of physical strength would be an asset at best and neutral at least for girls and a negative for boys.

The picture that the data provides shows a cohort of lonely and isolated children. While social competence and the number of friends can be related, a child may be isolated even if she were to possess measurably high social competence. In fact, some popular children are selected as the target of relational aggression precisely because they have a rich social life. Relational aggression, including cyberbullying, often very effectively damages the reputation and social status of a child with a rich and varied social network.

The next section looks at the affective results for these isolated children.

Cognitive Temporal

The cognitive sub-dimension includes all measures of any form of self-appraisal: self-esteem, self-worth, and self-efficacy. While these are very separate concepts, they all share the quality of cognitive self-appraisal that is variable in negative and positive directions. The directions of measures were made uniform and the dimension was divided into two main categories self-worth and self-blame. A single measurement of self-efficacy for aggression did not fit either category and was maintained in the cognitive dimension, rather than moved to the behavioral dimension, as it is a subjective perception.

Table 13: Results in the Cognitive/Temporal Dimension

Variable	%	Sig- nificant	Range of Scores and Mean	Means for Upper and Lower Grades
Self-worth	81%		-1.8581 to 0.3450	Lower 0.125 Upper - 0.6141
Self-blame	57%		- 0.2828 to 1.065 0.2902 (upper grades only)	n/a

Variable	%	Sig-	Range of Scores and Mean	Means for Upper and Lower Grades
Self-efficacy for aggression	one non-significant			one measure for the lower grades

Self-esteem was measured using three separate instruments although Harter's Self-Perception Profile for Children (1996) was used in 11 discrete measurements with a sub-scale of the Child Depression Inventory being the next most frequently used with three. The items in all three scales are similar giving this dimension a very low level of method variance. Low self-worth is particularly significant for older children as there is over six-fold decrease in self-worth between upper and lower grades. This indicates clearly that children who remain in the victim role will have their self-esteem systematically undermined through their bullying experiences, and, perhaps, that teenagers who experience victimization for the first time in the older grades will experience a fast undermining of their self-esteem. Oddly, self-blame does not appear to be correlated to negative self-esteem.

Self-blame and self-derogation, which was folded into the self-blame sub-dimension, were both seen as essentially the same phenomenon and were measured by two separate instruments: an original scale accounts for 8 of the measurements and the Social Experience Questionnaire (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996) was used once. Self-blame was only measured in the upper grades and did not show as strongly significant as other measures. This indicates that many victimized children are not ascribing blame to themselves for their bullying even though the bullying is undermining their self-esteem. Unfortunately, the meta-analytic method does not allow scores to be regressed to determine whether the cohort of self-blaming children suffer the same or, as seems likely, more severe symptoms than their non-self-blaming peers. It would be important to

measure self-blame in the earlier grades to see if that corresponds to the relatively low rates in older children.

Self-efficacy for aggression was included in the cognitive category as it is a cognitive assessment indicating that the child does not rate herself capable of acting out aggressively. The one result was for a study of a lower grade cohort and did not show a significant result in either direction. That study cohort, however, did not consider itself capable of acting aggressively which is not surprising given the powerlessness inherent in the bullying experience.

Affective Temporal

The affective temporal category includes all measures of emotional processes. These measures used the children themselves, their parents, or peers as informants and asked about the victimized child's subjective emotional state. These include items on specific moods, anxiety, and more global measures of anxiety and depression.

Internalization is a general term for emotionally aversive states that include and conflate anger, depression and anxiety, the inwardly directed symptoms. Table 14 shows the ranges, means and proportion of significant results.

Table 14: Results in the Affective/Temporal Dimension

Variable	% Significant	Range of Scores and Mean	Means for Upper and Lower Grades
Depression	100%	0.3871 to 1.1890 0.6988	Lower 0.4682 Upper 0.7744
Anhedonia*	100%	0.2622 to 0.4296 0.3602	n/a (only 2 items from upper level samples, both were Odds Ratios)
Anxiety	70%	0.1001 to 0.7473 0.3788 (one OR significant)	Lower 0.3505 Upper 0.3029
Emotional Problems	1 significant result	1.0078	n/a
Emotional Lability	1 significant result	0.4296	n/a
Internal-ization	87%	0.345 to 1.8051 1.2501 (two OR results)	n/a scores for lower grades only
Irritability	1 result in-significant OR		n/a

* Anhedonia refers to all items that indicate a low mood or lack of enjoyment

Depression and anxiety appear to be significant problems for victimized children. Depression is measured primarily using established scales: The Children's Depression (Kovacs, 1992) inventory was used 14 times with the Beck scale (Beck & Steer, 1993), the Child Behavior Check List (Achenbach, 1991), the Trauma Symptoms in Children Checklist (Briere, 1996) and the Health Behavior in Schools Checklist (WHO, 2009) and original items used in one to three of the measurements. One hundred percent of the measures of depression on scales as well as individual items under the rubric of anhedonia - low mood and unhappiness - were significant. A comparison of the means for depression scores in younger and older children show a 60% increase over time: by far the largest increase between age cohorts in any measurement within this review. While some part of this variance may be due to the difference in measures and capacity of children to accurately report their mood, it would be very unlikely that this explains a 60% increase. Coupled with a slight decrease in anxiety (.3505 to .3029) this seems to bear out Parker and Ashgari's (1997) prediction that anxiety in young children turns into early onset depression, which they show is co-morbid with other life difficulties.

One single item on emotional problems in general was separated into its own sub-category and showed a high degree of significance. Emotional lability was also unique and also showed a significant positive result. A single item on irritability did not show a significant correlation to bullying, but this was in one study.

Anxiety was quite common for victimized children although the means remain relatively steady over time. Anxiety was also measured using similar scales as for depression (HBSC, TSCC and the MASC Multidimensional Anxiety Scale – Children (March, Parker, Sullivan, Stallings, & Conners, 1997). Given the rise in depression over time, it seems likely that one group of victimized children develops generalized anxiety symptoms while a larger group becomes increasingly depressed over time. Some, of course, will develop both anxiety and depression.

Internalization is the aggregate score on complex scales such as the Achenbach, the Peer Nomination Inventory (Wiggins & Wender, 1961), and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 2001). Internalization conflates depression and anxiety as well as cognitive problems and was highly significant with an average - of 1.25. Measures of internalization were given only to lower grade children and showed an 87% rate of significant result.

Academic

The academic dimension includes such typical academic measures as grades and test scores, and teacher, self, and peer ratings of academic achievement; measures of attendance and tardiness are also included in this dimension as are perceptions of school. Schwartz (2008) reported on both math and reading and found that victimized children scored significantly lower on math but did score in a positive direction, although not

significantly, on reading. Two separate measures of participation are represented. Autonomous participation refers to a sub-scale that measures the independent and self-directed activity: this measure, while in a negative direction, was not at a significant level. Class participation, however, was strongly significant in a negative direction indicating that victimized children tend toward less class participation

Table 15: Results from the Academic Dimension

Variable	% Significant	Range of Scores and Mean	Means for Upper and Lower Grades
Marks and scores	85%	-0.1201 to -0.6521 -0.2990	Lower -0.28105 Upper -0.4734
Learning problem	Significant	0.3242	n/a
Attendance	33%	-0.02 to -.3242 -0.1120	n/a no upper grade data
School is hard	Significant	0.3914	single n/a
Participation	67%	-0.3660 to -0.1001 -0.2021	n/a no lower grades data
Cooperative part		-0.1403	single n/a
School liking	Significant	-0.1807	single n/a

Marks and test scores for victimized children were significant in 85% of the results at moderate levels for younger grades and significantly higher levels for older grades indicating the tendency for victimized children's academics to slide over time. Learning problems was kept as a separate measure since it is based on subjective perception: this single result is also significant and close to other scores within the range. Attendance was significantly lower but this measure is not that sensitive in the lower grades as children don't have as much freedom to skip classes or play truant. Most of these absences can be explained by the physical symptoms victimized children experience (discussed above).

Victimized children are seen, at older grades, to like school less, to find school hard and to participate less in class. Cooperative participation was not folded into general participation because the authors made the distinction and because this item retains features of social competence: it is possible for a child to participate academically while not cooperating socially.

The results of studies indicate a pervasive dampening of academic achievement and a decrease in comfort and enjoyment of the academic setting. Finding school hard is the highest co-variation in this dimension which is intuitively logical in that this would also capture the victimized children who are academically successful. Victimized children's academic performance either continues a downward spiral in older grades or is a more sensitive measure for the upper grades. This may be due to the increasing workload and complexity of material in the older grades. Measures of perception indicate that victimized children find school less rewarding, less pleasant, and experience more problems learning. Two

The positive direction for reading scores among victimized children is only one of two anomalies found in this review. While not significant it nevertheless was in an unexpected direction. It would be interesting to further study the reading of victimized children as well as socially isolated children in general. It can be hypothesized that some low play children spend more time reading, perhaps as a way to retain a semblance of social contact.

Behavioral

The behavioral dimension is comprised of a number of separate indicators all of which directly involve a measureable outward behavior. These include measures of

several types of aggression as well as measures of externalization, a global measure of behavior problems. Included are measures of delinquent behavior, anger as rated by peers and teachers, and violent and delinquent behaviors including carrying weapons and fighting.

Table 16: Behavioral Results

Variable	% Significant	Range of Scores and Mean	Means for Upper and Lower Grades
Aggression	62%	-0.1001 to 1.0361 mean 0.4493	n/a only one result from upper grades
Aggressive friends	60%	0.02 to 1.093 0.3728	Lower 0.1928 Upper n/a
Conduct	50%	0.3115 to 1.0078 0.4971	n/a
Externalization	100%	0.5608 to 0.9256 0.8437	No upper grade data
Substance Use	100%	0.1202 to .899 mean 0.5130	No lower grade data
Dominance	one non-significant		

Results within this review dimension are less homogeneous than other dimensions. Aggression itself was measured using 7 separate scales and one peer nomination protocol and scores range from -0.1 to over +1.0 which is over one standard deviation difference. All but one result was from the upper grades. This wide range is likely explained by the fact that some studies separate out bully/victims while others do not: this would result in higher aggression levels in those that include bully/victims, a separate subset of aggressive victims³⁴. Another likely explanation is that some habitual victims tend to be targeted precisely because of their emotional lability. One cohort of victimized children, therefore, may be quite compliant and non-aggressive while another may be aggressive.

³⁴ It is this writer's contention that self-report of victimization among bullies can be an exculpatory strategy or an example of hostile attribution, the attribution of hostile motive to neutral or benign actions.

Endorsement of aggression and violent behavior – approval of such behavior – was included in this category, but may function separately if it were found in future research that some children endorse aggressive acts without actually performing them themselves.

While the data shows that victimized children are not as physically strong as their cohort, after the first years in each educational institution --elementary, middle (and junior high), and high school– they are likely to be more powerful than the younger cohort and therefore do have access to a cohort that they could themselves bully.

Externalization, the global scalar measure for all externally visible problematic behaviors was measured with the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach, 1991) and the Peer Nomination Inventory (Wiggins & Wender, 1961) is the highest average score in behavioral dimension at 0.8437. Conduct problems, while only significant in half the results is the second highest co-variation in this dimension at 0.4971. Only one study (Adelmann, 2005) measured the use of substances.

Adelmann's study, with over 50,000 middle school children, it is the largest included in this review. The victimization measure used in the Adelmann study is considered to be low acuity and the prevalence rate of 35% is the highest in this review. Substance use was very high among victimized teens with measures of smoking, alcohol and drug use folded into one sub-dimension and having a 100% significance and an average co-variation of 0.5130.

The data in this dimension were not collected uniformly in upper and lower grades and with high shared method variance to the extent that it would be difficult to

draw conclusions: further research should be done on a wide sample using the same method and controlling for bully/victims.

Despite the inconsistencies, the results of the behavioral dimension appear to refute the commonly held perception that victims tend to be compliant and non-violent. Rather, it would appear that they lack the physical resources to defend themselves, and, perhaps, the belief that their efforts at self-defense could be effective.

Suicide

The studies of suicidal behavior are not sufficiently homogeneous to merit comparison in the way that the other studies. The methods differ and the statistical technique of Odds Ratio is significantly different than the continuous measures discussed above. Nevertheless, this section indicates that the risk of suicide is a significant effect of victimization and, therefore, a significant public health concern.

Table 17: Suicide Study Results

Variable	% Significant	Individual Scores and Mean	Means for Upper and Lower Grades
Suicidal Behaviors	100%	boys 1.69 (1.20-2.31) girls 2.54 (1.20-2.31) correlation 0.3034	Upper Only
Suicide Attempt (2 results)	100%	18.23 (5.11 – 65.10) boys 19.40 (6.52- 57.59)	“
Suicidal Ideation (2 results)	100%	19.65 (6.85 – 56.34) boys 27.38 (8.98- 83.53) girls	“
“Others would be better off without me” single result	not significant	correlations 0.294	“
Violent and Suicidal Behavior	100%	2.61 (1.78 – 3.69) boys 2.61 (1.66-3.90) girls	“

The shared method variance within this dimension and between the other dimensions in this review poses difficulties in comparing and contrasting results. As had been pointed out above, all but one suicide study was done using Odds Ratio effect sizes and there is an apparent lack of homogeneity in scores for similar phenomena within the suicide dimension: scores range from a low of 1.69/1 for suicidal behaviors to 27.38 for

suicidal ideation. The results for suicide attempt and ideation are ten times more significant than the result for suicidal behaviors which is too high a shared method variance to conflate. It is not immediately evident why the results would be so different.

Suicide attempt was measured using three separate scales the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1998), the Minnesota Student Survey (Minnesota Department of Children Families & Learning, 2001) and the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children (Shaffer, Fisher, Lucas, Dulcan, & Schwab-Stone, 2000). Suicidal ideation was measured using one instrument, the Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire (Reynolds, 1988). Since none of the suicide studies attempted to determine other forms of trauma and victimization it is unclear how much victimization alone contributed to the suicidal thoughts. This can be said of all the studies including the two Finkelhor studies since they put sibling and peer abuse in the same cohort (2007a, 2007b).

Despite the method variance it is clear that victimized children are at high risk for suicide and, perhaps, suicidal and homicidal combinations. All of the studies reported significant associations between experiences of victimization and suicide attempt, suicide behavior, and suicidal ideation. The odds of a victimized child having suicidal ideation and suicide attempts are particularly high but have very large confidence intervals for all four results which are typical of studies with a relatively small sample. Violent and suicidal behavior was maintained as a separate category as the two phenomena may not be related. Some children may be suicidal without having any intention of harming others while some combine both. This again gives credence to the notion that victimized children can pose risk for violence including school shootings (Vossekuil et al., 2002).

These teens may be particularly dangerous for such behaviors as vehicular homicide which may frequently be deliberate suicides that go uncounted if there is no note or other clear indication of suicidal intention (Freeman, Rossignol, & Hand, 2009).

While all the studies included for review used adolescent samples, Holt and colleagues (2007), in a study that couldn't be included due to the lack of convertible data, also found statistically significant rates of suicidal ideation among all ages, including young children.³⁵

As this project is being completed, the suicides of two teenagers have been getting significant media attention. One, a boy, was bullied with homophobic epithets and another, a girl, was hounded on the Internet.

³⁵ The author was contacted but was not able to furnish the standard deviations required to convert the means and Ns to a co-variation metric.

PART VII SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

In this section the findings will be synthesized. The findings will be analyzed for their fit with Habermas's theory, a model of these effects will be depicted, and the two discrete anomalies found in the review will be discussed. The final section will include a discussion of the possible positive or neutral effects of bullying experiences and will give suggestions for future research and interventions. The section ends with a brief discussion of the place this dissertation may play in the eventual creation of a theory that can be used to guide social work practice.

The results of this review suggest a logical order to the temporal and spatial effects of bullying that start with the initial spatial and physical reactions which lead to changes in the quality of the social environment. This social and spatial experience leads to repeated affective and cognitive processes that lead to an academic slide, depressive symptoms and generalized anxiety, and destructive behaviors up to and including suicide.

There is an important caveat that needs to be considered in analyzing this review: no study isolated peer victimization from other forms of trauma and victimization. The two related studies by Finkelhor and colleagues (2007a, 2007b) do isolate bullying from most other forms of victimization but they include sibling victimization with bullying - the two phenomena may in many cases be unrelated; nevertheless, some of the processes that compromise or change development may be similar with other forms of victimization. For example, sibling abuse would make the home as unsafe as the school perhaps resulting in an additive effect.

This review does not imply causation. The results of this review show a set of associations that appear to coalesce into a single model: no definitive conclusion about

causation could be made at this stage of scholarship. This review also presents a, perhaps, idiosyncratic interpretation of Habermas's concepts: Professor Habermas is retired from his academic positions and this writer was not able to find a way to correspond with him on the interpretation of his ideas.

Fit with the Theory of Communicative Action

The systematic review finds overwhelming evidence that Habermas's theory of communicative action can explain a large part of the effects of bullying. Most of the theoretical concepts relevant to the topic of bullying correspond closely to the dimensions presented in the previous section. In this section the core concepts of the theory will be compared to the results of the systematic review. In terms of Dubin's schema it appears that the theory and empirical results are very close if not identical and is sufficient to explain all the results.

Such Habermasian concepts as cognitive distortion - in the form of problems with self-esteem and self-blame - and social competence were measured directly, and the both binding force and play deprivation were measured indirectly in that both these concepts can be extrapolated from the data that show victimized children to be socially isolated, play less, have fewer social attachments and are less physically active.

While the effects of bullying on identity formation was not directly or explicitly measured, despite the availability of instruments that measure identity in older children, there is plenty of passive evidence for distortions of identity within this review. A direct measure of identity would include such things as preferences and interactional styles such as introspection or sense of humor.

No study measured either role formation or validity claims – attempts to influence others through communicative and consensual means – of children who are bullied.

While two studies measured bonding this was not taken to be synonymous with Habermas's binding energy since that concept hasn't been directly investigated at this point: it would be hard to make the case that bonding and attachment were the same as

binding energy when that concept has not been empirically verified. This lack of confirmation of Habermas's direct concepts was to be expected as the original research was not based on Habermas's theory of communicative action.

Table 18 relates the mechanisms of effect and the predicted results described above. The first two columns are the predicted mechanisms through which the bullying experience can damage a child, the third column answers whether or not there is evidence in the studies reviewed. Evidence that refutes Habermas's theory would have been placed in that column as well but no such contradictory evidence was found.

Table 18: Empirical Evidence for Predicted Results

Mechanism of Effect	Predicted Results	Empirical Evidence
Passive Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lower levels of play and activity • lower levels of autonomy • decline in social skills • distorted identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yes • no • yes • yes
Active Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct confirmation of theorized processes such as observing validity claims among children, direct measurement of illocutionary bonding, and direct observation of role rehearsal • distorted identity based on the habitual role of victim • fewer effective instrumental skills • tendency for the victim role to become active across geographic contexts • illocutionary bonding • cognitive and affective distortion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no • partial • no • no • not in this review • yes
NB:	active and passive results may repeat in the subsequent categories	
ambient stress/shrinking of safe space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of enjoyment of school • lack of safety at school • sleep disturbance • concentration disturbance • lower academic performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yes • yes • yes • not directly • yes

(Table 18 continued on next page)

Mechanism of Effect	Predicted Results	Empirical Evidence
deprivation of play (Pepler)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less (more circumscribed) rehearsal of adult roles • less enjoyment of social world • less physical activity through play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no • yes • yes
binding force identity problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attachment and connection • distortion or lack of identity formation (Table continues...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yes (indirectly) • yes
diminished opportunity for role preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bullying as a preparation for an adult role (perhaps with the implicit or explicit support of adults or older children) as suggested by Brunkhorst. • role formation • social skills formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no data directly measuring role formation • no • yes
diminished opportunity to improve social skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less opportunity to acquire the skills needed for taking different social roles in different contexts • loneliness • deep imprinting of instrumental social skills at the expense of the skills required for consensus building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yes • yes • no

Habermas's theory of communicative action appears to subsume and explain several theories and links intrapsychic motivations with socio-cultural forces acting, as Ritzer (2001) suggests, as a meta-theory. While it is true that Habermas distills many existing theories and explains the generation of theory as part of the process of communication, this writer prefers to characterize the theory of communicative action as extremely broad in its boundaries rather than subsuming other theories. The theory of communicative action is simply a good social theory that is able to explain the phenomenon of bullying more clearly than any other.

Habermas derives many of his ideas by synthesizing the work of foundational thinkers in many disciplines. Considering that all the social scientists contributing to this review were operating at least in part within the intellectual traditions Habermas elucidated, it may be inevitable that the results adhere to these essential concepts.

The theory of communicative action, then, can make a complex phenomenon visible and cohesive. Theory gives focus to analysis and helps to adapt or create language that is helpful in grasping the social situations and contexts of bullying. Habermas's terminology is precise and hard to replace but may lack the type of poetry that it takes to motivate people to make change.

Anomalies

There were two anomalies within the review, far fewer than had been anticipated. Of the two anomalies found only one was significant; they were, however, related. The significant finding was that victimized children were observed talking during play time which appears to contradict the data that shows that they tend to play less and be more socially isolated; the other anomalous finding was that they scored, as a group, in a positive direction for reading scores in comparison to universally depressed scores for all other academic areas among victimized children. It may be that victimized children are using decoding skills in order to protect themselves in the social environment; they may also derive some secondary social benefit from reading; and they may be conversing with peers in a non-play way, perhaps commiserating with other children who are also somehow isolated, victimized or rejected.

None of the data appeared to contradict propositions based on Habermas's theory.

The Visibility of Effects Processes

The theory of communicative action makes visible the nature of instrumental and communicative states. As had been shown in Table 4 above, various research methods look at human processes that have varying degrees of visibility. For this systematic review those obscured processes include internal emotional states of depression and

anxiety and cognitive processes and the visible processes include the quantitative measures of a child's social life and behavior. As was discussed above such latent variables as bonding and cognitive distortion were actually well measured. The link between play and communicative action is still tenuous but there does appear to be a negative correlation between victimization experiences and free play.

The following sections elaborate on some of these theorized processes. What follows is a model created from this systematic review.

Final Model: Developmental Effects

Bullying affects children adversely on several levels. What might seem to be a global effect of victimization on children's functioning is, in fact, a specific process through which children's short-term well-being and long-term development is affected. The systematic review data have confirmed enough of the effects predicted by Habermas's theory of communicative action to begin the process of creating a model of the effects of bullying.

The purpose of the model is to understand the patterns and temporal processes involved when a child is victimized. Theoretical concepts and relationships can be applied to show that the data work together. The data in this review confirms the passive effects of bullying: social, spatial, physical, affective- and cognitive-temporal processes, and play deprivation. Active effects of bullying would need to be confirmed by new research specifically based on Habermas's theory.

The data suggest a temporal sequence in the effects of bullying. The initial, contemporaneous, effect of bullying, together with the set of physical effects, is a narrowing of social space. The theory of communicative action suggests that social

effects would mediate the other effects of bullying. Those children who can maintain consensual relationship and retain a space for free play would be predicted to remain relatively less affected by their experience of victimization; this would need to be confirmed through a research protocol that tests the direct effects of the theorized variables.

Bullying can start at any time, although, since it is predicated on power imbalance, it is likely to start earlier for children entering the system constitutionally smaller and meeker. Some children have a continuous or episodic, long-term experience of bullying, while others have a sudden bullying experience after years of successful social interactions.

Sudden, long-term, or episodic experiences of bullying affect the social world in different ways. Children with successful social lives can suffer a sudden and cataclysmic change in their social life; long-term targets will experience a delay in their social skills development; children with episodic experiences will have periods of remission, in which their symptoms diminish or disappear. A large part of the latter two groups begin to experience cognitive and affective distortions over time followed by or consequent to physical problems, attentional and academic problems, and affective problems up to and including suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. The processes by which children are damaged may in most cases follow a rational set of steps.

The ability to rise above conflict, whether petty or crucial, is for Habermas the highest form of social competence, but suggesting that we rise above conflict does not mean he is asking us to remain passive in the face of injustice. He is, however, asking us to stop it from affecting our life globally. As is evident from the relatively low scores for

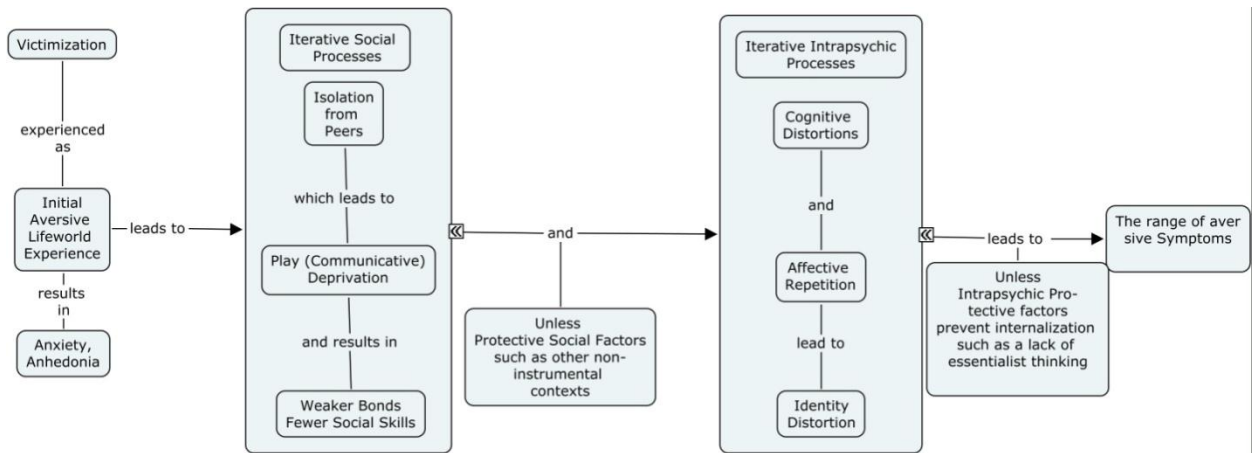
the victimized cohort some children who are bullied, even repeatedly, may not be affected globally. They are finding a way to endure the experience without having to internalize it.

The children who are badly affected by these continuous and repeating experiences appear to have specific kinds of cognitive reactions to repeated humiliations. These may be understood as a rational response to real experience rather than arising from an inherent weakness within the child. A large part of the victimized cohort experience diminished self-worth and some experience a process in which they blame themselves for the bullying. It can be surmised that self-blame will be closely associated with the more severe effects and levels of effects: this should be the subject of future research.

The concept map in Figure 8 shows a preliminary model for the effects of bullying almost all of which is directly or indirectly supported by the research. The model shows how the initial bullying results in a present effect of lessening pleasure and increasing anxiety in a child. Continuing victimization leads to a set of social effects including isolation from peers which in turn leads to the deprivation of play and communicative states and results in weaker social bonds and fewer social skills. Without other strong supportive environments the child may then experience repeating negative cognitive and affective process unless protected by internal resources that prevent the internalization of victimization. These repeated internal processes result in distortions of identity and, potentially, a set of serious consequences such as depression, conduct disorders, violence and suicide.

This review begins to address the mechanisms by which children’s development is affected by peer victimization. Finkelhor (2007b) in suggesting the idea of developmental victimology would like to find those effects that are common to the other major forms of victimization of children. A further research project reviewing the effects of emotional, physical and sexual abuse could identify any common features as well as syndromes or symptoms that are specific to particular forms of abuse.

Figure 9: Concept Map of Mechanism of Effect



Children Who Are Less Affected/Sources of Statistical Error

In this section sources of error will be explored. In the statistical sense, the term “source of error” refers to the measure of the estimated difference between the observed effect and the theorized effect. In this case, the largest likely source of statistical error would be the group of children who remain unaffected by bullying experiences. In the social sciences error can be understood as all latent, theorized, variables that can explain the difference in scores. This would include random error which arises from simple mistakes in orthography or comprehension. In this case the “error” would be the reasons that children are unaffected by bullying.

Some children who have been bullied appear to be unaffected by the experience because of their fundamental resilience; others because of problems such as autism spectrum disorders that make children resistant to social interaction. These children might have been subject to bullying and would score high on measures of victimization but may score low on the effects measurements if they do not mind being isolated. Research into the characteristics, attributes, and strategies of these children will be helpful to design interventions and to control for statistical error.

Another source of error relates to children who have escaped the victim role. At any point bullying may end. While bullying tends to be stable, there are always children whose victim status ends for a variety of reasons: an intervention may help a child learn to be less affected by bullying, a child may experience a growth spurt that has him suddenly towering over his former tormentor, or a child may enter a higher status social group that is less vulnerable to bullying. Further, a bullying child may learn a more effective set of social skills and thus stop the bullying themselves. It would be expected that some symptoms of victims would stop after the bullying ceases.

The degree of error involving escaped victims is dependent on the retrospective span that the researcher uses in her survey (e.g., a question like, Have you been bullied within the past year?). An escaped victim would endorse herself as a victim if she had been bullied within that time span but, depending on her resilience, may no longer show any symptoms related to that bullying event. The longer the retrospective span used, the higher the source of error. This error could be controlled by asking children who escaped the victim role to self identify and using regression techniques to determine the characteristics and effects that differ from children still in that role.

As was stated above, some children may be positively affected by their bullying experiences. Smith and Talamelli (2004) documented a cohort of children who ascribe positive effects such as an improvement in self-esteem and self-efficacy after successfully negotiating bullying experiences. This cohort, depending on the retrospective span, could endorse themselves as having been bullied but may show higher self-esteem, self-efficacy, and improved academic performance. Another group of children not distressed by being bullied may be children raised in highly oppressive and abusive environments; these children may have little expectation of communicative states.

Perhaps the most significant source of error in the social dimension is the variable entry and exit from victimization roles. In order to control for this error longitudinal methods should be used to track both the well-being of children as well as their initial and ongoing victimization experiences.

None of the selected studies specifically looked for positive effects of bullying; however, the evidence that bullying has a global negative impact is overwhelming. It is likely, as Smith and Talamelli (2004) found, that a proportion of victimized children having escaped the victim role derived benefit from the bullying experience. It is also possible that some multiply victimized children derive a benefit from being victimized in as yet unforeseen ways: for example, a submissive stance may be adaptive for a child who is being victimized at home and who would be put at risk if she became more powerful. There is also some possibility that adult masochism may have roots in childhood experiences and that some children enjoy the bullying as a form of negative attention.

Such positive effects would be seen in a meta-analysis as a source of error, in that some proportion of victimized children would score higher on positive traits and lower on negative effects. Sources of error are discussed in the next section.

Suggestions for Future Research

The above review leads to many suggestions for future research. These will be briefly outlined below.

Creating Standards

It would be ideal for the community of bullying researchers to create standards that will make it easier to build knowledge in concert. Studies using comparable measures and definitions could be easily compared using various meta-analytic techniques. It may be time for bullying researchers to come together in person and over the Internet to discuss issues of standardization and to set an agenda for future directions in bullying research.

Support and Repair: Strengths

Habermas's theory of communicative action may be able to subsume the strengths perspective. The bullying research in this review looks at the absence of or alienation from experiences of support, repair, and solidarity in victimized children's lives; direct research into children's interactions needs to be done to identify acts of solidarity. This writer conducted a three-year research study, *Searching for Safety, into violence and bullying in an inner city school* and identified many minute³⁶ interactions of support and repair that fit into the schema of communicative action (Kogan & Chandan, unpublished data).

³⁶ The term minute is used because the acts that were observed tended to be subtle within the context of violence and bullying: rather than directly confronting the bully, children showed solidarity with victims through sharing of toys and food, touch and symbolic play, such as talking about superheroes saving the day.

Future research could observe and document repair processes and compare the qualities of the social lives of victimized and non-victimized children. It would be important also to explore the social world of children who escape the victim role or those who are unaffected by bullies in order to develop novel interventions that prevent or mitigate the effects of bullying.

Social Skills and Social Connections

The systematic review shows that there is no further need to study the social connectedness of victimized children. It is clear from multiple studies that they have smaller friendship networks and are significantly lonelier than their non-victimized peers. Loneliness may be present in most or all victimized children and factor analysis research should be done to determine whether measures of loneliness can be used as an indicator of victimization, or perhaps, an indicator that victimization is having a clearly negative impact. If loneliness were a good indicator that bullying was occurring, surveying children to determine their loneliness would be an efficient way for educators and social workers to identify the often hidden population of victims.

It would be hard to underestimate the importance of social skills development within childhood for the quality of life of both the child in the present day as well as the adult that will emerge. A rich social world can be compared to a rich constellation shimmering stars on a moonless night. A single warm interaction can open an individual life to infinite possibilities. A chance encounter can spark a relationship that can expose a young adult to new ways of thinking, music, arts, job opportunities and marriage prospects. By contrast a narrow social world is a darker world, albeit comfortable for

those with social anxiety or an aversion to unpredictable stimulation, with less serendipity.

Essentialist Thinking of Victims

It has already been shown that essentialist thinking contributes to the acts of bullying (S.A. Gelman, 2003; Giles, 2003). The theory of communicative action would suggest that a self-reification or essentialist thinking process may be fundamental to the cognitive distortions that victims suffer. It would be important to test children affected with anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem to determine whether they, as a group, have a tendency toward essentialist thinking. This would entail the development of an instrument as the studies done by Giles and Gelman and Heyman have been qualitative in nature. If it turns out that essentialist thinking is a precursor to any or all ill effects of bullying, then interventions to change that would be in order.

If reification contributes to the act of bullying and is also a mechanism of distortion for victims the best intervention may be curricular. Children who can stop the essentialist thinking will have an easier time developing productive social skills and being protected from the ill effects of trauma and stress. Schools may be able to teach flexible thinking and could modify their recess and physical education time to allow autonomous activities while ensuring that they are relatively free of bullying.

Identity Formation and Bullying

None of the studies conducted in the US measured the effects of victimization on the formation of identity *per se*; however, the aggregated data can be seen as synonymous with identity using the definition of identity as stable characteristics over time and space (A. van Hoof & Raajimakers, 2003). The study cannot draw a conclusion about any

individual child's identity but can certainly be used to confirm that victimization distorts identity in negative directions affecting the cognition, behavior, mood and social life of the child.

Low play and cognitive distortions such as low self-esteem together with greater social isolation and diminished social skills can be expected to compromise the formation of identity, those set of verbal and physical actions and reactions that repeat over time in such a way that these characteristics can identify the individual. Future research would be helpful in particular looking at how different forms of bullying can affect identity. It is possible that researchers will find a pattern to the identity of some victims such that they are more likely to be selected as victims across social contexts.

Developmental Victimology

As was suggested above, future research could compare the constellation of effects of other forms of abuse experienced in childhood in order to determine whether there are common effects between and among different forms of victimization. Mynard, Joseph and Alexander's (2000) research shows different types of victimization have different sequelae, so it is more likely that there will be common effects to the qualities of the different forms of victimization. For example, forms of family violence that rely on isolation will likely result in similar effects as social bullying; similarly, it is likely that emotional abuse by adults will result in diminishing self-worth in similar ways that verbal victimization does in children. Determining these commonalities and differences will require a concerted research effort using both secondary data as well as original research.

Suggestions for Bullying Interventions

The value to the social work profession for testing Habermas's theory is to guide and improve practice in order to improve the well-being of children. If a theory is able to explain the nature of a social phenomenon including its effects it follows logically that it would then be able to form the basis for a novel and effective intervention. For bullying, a comprehensive theory should prevent bullying from occurring, stop it when it does occur and mitigate its ill effects.

Such a project to really end deleterious bullying would require intervention on several levels. In the US legislation at the State level requires district-level intervention; but an effective intervention based on the theory of communicative action should involve a

change in the national education policy as well as a change in the culture in favor of genuinely egalitarian and inclusive practices. Such a vision, at this time, may seem chimeric; however, Habermas's theory provides a roadmap for future social work policy advocacy.

The above review suggests several interventions that can be formed from the theory of communicative action. Some of these interventions would not differ from existing anti-bullying interventions, whereas others would look radically different. What follows is a series of ideas for interventions that are suggested by the theory.

Types of Speech/Act and Bullying Interventions

A communicative action intervention would consider the different types of speech/act: instrumental and communicative. Whereas several existing anti-bullying programs emphasize the acquisition of positive social skills, which would be considered communicative speech/acts, a good intervention based on the theory should also emphasize promote the acquisition of instrumental skills. In line with Habermas's neutral definition of instrumental action such a program would teach children how to initiate instrumental action effectively and respectfully. As had been pointed out above, children have many naturally-occurring opportunities to employ instrumental speech/acts: children may take informal and formal instrumental roles such as team captain, school prefect or hall monitor, and older relatives and friends often keep an eye out for the safety of smaller children safe from cars or unknown adults; some children may humanely help other children learn about and adhere to school norms.

An intervention program based on communicative action would include modules of teaching the skills of instrumental action in order to divert the bullying impulse into

positive directions. Teaching and promoting instrumental skills would involve teaching children how to use social power while taking into considerations the ability and desires of others, rather than riding roughshod over the autonomy of others. Such an approach would have the added advantage of changing the framework from a bully/victim dichotomy to one in which the instrumental aspirations at the heart of a bully's actions can be accepted and respected. Such aspirations, however, require considerable resources.

Rich interest-based curriculum and extra-curricular activities are essential elements of a theory of communicative action-based program. A child who is motivated to bully by a desire to entertain can be provided with creative opportunities to build on that desire through theater or music programming, and a child whose bullying is motivated by a desire to enforce norms could become involved in student government. The latter suggestion would involve considerable adult support to integrate children with “problems” into activities frequently exclusive to higher functioning and compliant children. Such suggestions would require educators to endorse the ideas of communicative action and integrate these into pedagogical theory.

Social Skills and Social Bonding

Almost every credible bullying intervention program stresses the importance of raising the level of social skill, particularly for the bullying child. A program based on the theory of communicative action would also seek to improve social skills but would do so equally for both victims and bullies. This is because the theory and the research in this review show that victimization delays and impedes the acquisition of social skills.

Social skills have primacy within the theory because they lead to deeper and more effective social bonding which, in turn, opens up an infinitely variable richness of the

social world. These social bonds may be deep and intimate but others may be more superficial and temporary. Social bonds lead to healthier social action than does the instrumental action based on coercion and simple coordination. Commitment, convention and covenant describe the bonds underlying very strongly motivated action; these contrast with instrumentally-derived action, which represent compliance with benign or malign authority.

Interpreting Habermas's schema, such healthy bonding necessarily requires children to consider the standpoints of others and requires that the child has had a rich and diverse experience of other children in social contexts with sufficient autonomy for self-exploration. These contexts are most frequently found in free or freer play activities.

The systematic review above suggests that the deprivation of play is one of the main detrimental effects of bullying. An effective intervention would be to establish or restore free play contexts. After bullying has become part of a school culture, however, it would likely continue to instrumentalize a large segment of a free play environment. In other words, without an intervention bullies would continue to instrumentalize most autonomous contexts.

The promotion of free play presents a paradox for social workers and educators attempting to prevent, ameliorate, and arrest bullying. Autonomy is a complex issue when applied to the problem of bullying. The theory would suggest that victimized children still need an autonomous environment yet helping and teaching professionals tend to increase structure and adult supervision for children experiencing any kind of problem. Extra-curricular activities that provide more autonomous environments are often comprised of the least needy and most academically accomplished children, and

many such activities are available only to middle and upper class children. This writer was unable to find the quantitative data that would support the former statement; but it has certainly been true in his practice experience spanning three countries and two continents.

Communicative action occurring in autonomous social contexts is essential to the development of a healthy identity; yet bullying occurs unchecked where adult supervision is sparse. The social skills curriculum, Second Step **, includes regular discussion about events that occur that day on the playground and how the children applied social skills they've learned in a real-world context. An intervention program should include such a curriculum component as well as opportunities for children to interact in unstructured contexts. Adult supervision, however, is essential so long as the adults limit their intervention to teaching appropriate skills on the playground.

On the level of macro-level, national policy the institutional arrangements of the school system, as Noguera (1995) suggests, need to be reconstituted to allow for greater autonomy. An effective policy would allow more opportunities for marginalized and distressed children to experience more, not less, autonomy. It would involve training teachers to implement more unstructured activities into classroom activities as well as seeing arts and special interests as a universal right for all children rather than a finite commodity for a privileged few. Such a policy would also need to pay attention to non-academic aspects of the school system in general including how transitions and transportation occur and how playgrounds are supervised.

Toward a Lifeworld Theory of Social Work Practice

The systematic review in this dissertation is on the topic of school bullying, yet, this writer's application of Habermas's theory of communicative action to the problem of school bullying has led him to the conclusion that Habermas's social theory has the potential to provide the basis for an effective and comprehensive social work theory making a significant contribution to social work's major methods. Habermas's theory not only adds considerably to our understanding of the social world, it is also able to subsume and integrate a number of existing theories across disparate disciplines. In this section, this writer will explore the assertion that Habermas's theory of communicative action shows promise as a general social work practice theory.

As has been reiterated in this paper, the articles selected for the school bullying review, with few exceptions, offered no coherent theory about how victimized children are affected by bullying. Through this project, this writer found that Habermas's theory of communicative action is able to subsume the theories that explain how bullying arises and also shows how bullying affects children. The theories that Habermas's theory subsumes in relation to bullying are: social information-processing theory which emphasizes an internal representation of social processes; social learning theory which emphasizes the ability of experiences to result in children's distorted behaviors; and attachment theory, which suggests that the ability of a child to form secure bonds is an essential component to future well-being. In addition, Habermas's theory makes visible the actions of support which constitute the anodyne power of supportive acts similar to the factors described in social work's strengths perspective literature, as is evidenced by the deleterious effects of their absence.

The data from this review of bullying, interpreted from a Habermasian theoretical frame, show what happens when children experience a surfeit of instrumental social states. The victimized children frequently react through their bodies with anxiety and school avoidance. Those children who continue to be adversely affected are significantly lonelier, and their social skills development is arrested. It is clear from the data that these affected children play less and are generally less physically active. With time, this social isolation has a global effect on mood and academic functioning for children that internalize negative self-assessments and sentiments; and, some percentage of victimized children will act out with behaviors that injure themselves and others; those most symptomatic may develop chronic anxiety and depression.

The Theory of Communicative Action's Unique Contribution

Habermas's theory of communicative action, through the universal pragmatics' method, is rigorously based on life processes. Universal pragmatics functions for social science in a way that is similar to the null hypothesis in hard science, eliminating all ideas whose opposite cannot be proven to be true in the social world. While universal pragmatics is most often described as the search for the conditions for mutual understanding, this description misses the larger scope of Habermas's work with its ability to explain both meaning making and action—a far wider sphere of theorizing that includes most or all of the social world, including the connection to the subjective and intrapsychic experience. Universal pragmatics also looks for ideas that are capable of crossing disciplines: this is similar to the way the social work profession finds ideas from all appropriate disciplines with which to intervene in the real world.

Habermas describes the nature of human speech and the coordination of social actions. His division of speech/acts into instrumental and communicative categories allows the social work profession to have a deeper understanding of the nature of social environments. An instrumental social context, by its nature, limits the autonomy of the people involved by lowering the number of choices of appropriate responsive speech/acts; by contrast, a truly communicative social context allows for a theoretically infinite number of choices of speech/acts. Bullying, as a form of oppression, is an instrumental social context that can damage communicative social contexts in the form of play and autonomous social interaction.

This writer's project was limited to school bullying, yet adult experiences of abuse and oppression may affect people through similar mechanisms, although without the element of rapid developmental change that characterizes childhood. Domestic violence perpetrators, for example, tend to isolate their partners from social supports and systematically undermine their partners' self-esteem in ways that are similar to child bullies' speech/acts against their victims. Longitudinal research being conducted in Europe will presently have data about the quality of the marriages of the bullies and victims studied in childhood; it will be interesting to see whether the phenomenon of school bullying transfers into adulthood in the form of domestic abuse or community violence.

By explaining the conditions for communication and the mechanisms of social action, Habermas's theory of communicative action could be used to explain not only bullying but other problems within the social work field. Habermas's theory is broad enough to explain the etiology of large social forces and their connection to minute

internal processes. By linking intrapsychic processes with larger social forces, the theory covers the same territory as such social work models as the ecological and biopsychosocial models.

Habermas's theory of communicative action not only subsumes the theories mentioned above in relation to bullying, but also materialist theories, such as behaviorism, evolutionary biology, and economic theories that are predicated on rewards that accrue to a person through particular behaviors. Habermas, indeed, extends social theory into an intersubjective dimension that acknowledges a set of behaviors that people engage in even in the absence of reward: these behaviors include meaning making, altruism, and acts of solidarity and support that can't always be reciprocated, and may, at times, be risky, as in the case of defending a victim. By subsuming materialist theory, Habermas allows that much human activity is verifiably motivated by rewards, but under some conditions, human behavior occurs without reasonable expectation of reward.

Habermas's theory of communicative action has considerable breadth and can be applied to a wide range of social phenomena. The ability of Habermas's theory to subsume various social work theories confirms Ritzer's notion that the theory is a "meta-theory." This writer, however, prefers to see Habermas's theory of communicative action from Dubin's schema of theory building in which the theory can be seen to have a very large boundary: it is able to explain and predict intrapsychic effects such as cognitive and behavioral distortion, as well as organization and maintenance of complex societies. Habermas's theory explains all non-genetic sources of social action, in other words, all action that is socially, cognitively, affectively, as well as biologically determined. His notion of the lifeworld contains the biological needs and constraints that human

communities must furnish to flourish. Systems that are in synch with these human needs and constraints provide services and organization to complex groupings of people.

Pathology occurs when the systems diverge from the lifeworld.

A Lifeworld Theory of Social Work

This writer proposes that a new theory based on Habermas's theory of communicative action be coined for social work. This writer will call this the "Lifeworld Theory." The Lifeworld Theory would explain the connection between larger social phenomena and the cognitive, affective, and even physical elements of the individual human being. The Lifeworld Theory would absorb social work ideas about non-genetic sources of distortion, such as family influences, social forces that limit organic drives, and interest-based motivations.

In the lifeworld, the boundaries between communicative and instrumental states are not simple: within the same social group, sub-groups may have very different experiences. Communicative action within communicative social states should not be seen as an ideal utopian context that would exist if not for nefarious faceless conspirators, although there is room in Habermas's theory for that degree of social manipulation; rather, his theory should be understood as a way of analyzing the social world. Within the same geographical area, the nature of the social community could vary greatly as positive sub-groups coalesce around individuals and communities with good social skills.

Strengths Perspective and Social Work Methods

A Lifeworld Theory could be used for all major social work methods: casework, group work, community organization, administration, and policy. It also has

the potential to explain the nature of human strength and resilience as part of a body of theory rather than, as is currently practiced, a model or perspective.

The power of communicative action and the binding force of consensually-derived action explain the effectiveness of group work as a treatment and mutual support modality. Community organization could benefit from the nuanced analysis of communicative and instrumental states, and social work administrators practicing from a Lifeworld Theory would have very specific skills and tools to analyze the informal and formal communication within agencies and make sure the systems stay aligned with the lifeworld. A Lifeworld Theory-based casework approach would certainly result in interventions that could uncover and mobilize strengths and social skills.

Considerable practice and research would be required to determine whether and to what degree a Lifeworld Theory could help social workers intervene effectively. The apparent applicability to all social work methods, however, indicates that this theory would be a good candidate for a general social work theory that could be taught to social workers and effectively implemented in practice settings.

APPENDIX I Criteria for Study Selection: Databases and Key Words

Bibliographic Databases:

BiblioBranchee (France and Quebec)
 Cochrane Collaboration
 Campbell Collaboration C2-SPECTR
 Database of reviews of effectiveness (DARE online),
 Dissertation Abstracts International (DAI)
 ERIC
 MEDLINE
 NCAAN Information (Child Abuse and Neglect)
 Psychological Abstracts (PsycINFO, PsycLIT)
 SCOPUS
 Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) (UK)
 Social Work Abstracts
 Social Science Citation Index
 Social Sciences Abstracts
 Social Service Abstracts
 Sociological Abstracts (Sociofile)
 Urban Studies Abstracts

Search Engines:

Biblioline
 De.licio.us (conceptual ontologies website)
 Francite
 Google/Google Scholar
 Lexus Nexus
 Lycos (France)

Keywords and subject headings were searched systematically (searches were modified according to the specific database):

Bullying
 Child
 Child Abuse
 Cyberbullying
 Harassment/Harcèlement
 Identite/Identity
 Intervention
 Intimidation
 Peer Victimization
 Peer Harassment
 Power/Pouvoir
 Prevention
 School

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