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THE WILEY BLACKWELL HANDBOOK OF BULLYING

A COMPREHENSIVE AND INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND INTERVENTION

VOLUME 1

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24

Parents and Bullying

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The purpose of this review is to examine the role of family, and especially parents, in relation to bullying victimization (the topic of sibling bullying is covered in Chapter 6 in Volume 2). When we talk about bullying, we refer to all forms of bullying (e.g., direct, indirect) and the ways it is practiced (e.g., traditional bullying versus cyberbullying). Traditional bullying and cyberbullying often co-occur, with the former starting at school and continuing at home via online procedures as the latter. Still, there are differences in terms of definition, developmental characteristics, processes involved, and context (Baldry, Farrington, Sorrentino, & Blaya, 2018; and Chapters 6 and 7, this volume). In structuring this review, we first consider why bullying victimization necessitates the examination of family factors, before discussing some major assumptions regarding our review. Next, we examine the potential role of family factors in children's/adolescents' bullying victimization, building on recent and emerging work at different levels of family life and functioning. We then focus on the association between family strategies and the ways youth address bullying/victimization in- and outside the family context, as well as family coping enhancement, particularly bystanders' or observers' active involvement in helping with bullying/victimization.

Why Parents?

There are several reasons why parents are involved in the research on bullying, as not only do they contribute significantly to addressing the issues of bullying and victimization but also provide rewarding insight into anti-bullying interventions (Karga, Bibou-Nakou, & Giaglis, 2013; Bibou-Nakou, Tsiantis, Assimopoulos, & Chatzilambou, 2013; Nickerson, Mele, & Osborne-Oliver, 2010).

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First of all, parents play an important part in the socio-ecological model, as has been well known since the late 1980s (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), and is broadly acknowledged as an appropriate model for bullying victimization research. There is a wealth of findings that call attention to family factors as crucial in the conceptualization of bullying, as well as in prevention/intervention programs (Gómez-Ortiz, Apolinario, Romera, & Ortega-Ruiz, 2019).

This is followed by the fact that parents of bullied children experience severe distress and frustration (Rigby, 2019); in general, parents are "sad and angry" (Harcourt, Jasperse, & Green, 2014) when their children experience bullying victimization, on top of which they may have an overall lack of the necessary information on their children's bullying experience, a fact of great concern. This lack of information is grounded in the children's inadequacy of disclosure based on a wide range of reasons and depending on a lot of contextual factors, student characteristics and trajectories of bullying experiences (see Blomquist, Saarento-Zaprudin & Salmivalli, 2020; Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Rigby & Barnes, 2002; Smith, 2014). Children's prevalence of telling someone about victimization has been found to be around 70% (Hunter, Boyle, & Warden, 2004); students choose telling parents rather than teachers (Fekkes et al., 2005; Smith & Shu, 2000), and friends rather than adults. Blomquist et al. (2020), in a sample of Finnish students, found that 34% of the bullied students told an adult at home, whereas 20.6% of them told a teacher, a percentage much higher in comparison to these of previous studies which varied from 3% to 18%.

In relation to children's disclosure practices in the family, Stives, May, Pilkinton, Bethel, and Eakin (2019), for instance, attribute children's resistance to share bullying practices with their parents to a number of different interpretations, such as parental over-reaction, lack of effective and helpful parent-child communication, and parental lack of interest. Parental lack of awareness is also due to the absence of transparency on behalf of the schools to inform parents in time, an interpretation which has been largely underestimated (Schott & Søndergaard, 2014).The strategies parents apply when/if informed to deal with bullying have a significant impact on the children's disclosure of their bullying experiences (Matsunaga, 2009; Sawyer, Mishna, Pepler, & Wiener, 2011).

Last but not least, parents are called on to support their children who are experiencing or practicing bullying and suffering (severe) stress (Matsunaga, 2009; Rigby, 2019). Children need support from their families and if they fail to receive it, gradually lose their state of resilience and active wellbeing (Baldry et al., 2018; Frisén & Holmqvist Gattario, 2009).

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Central Assumptions of Our Approach

In line with the above-mentioned framework of approaching bullying/victimization, different definitions have been put forward since the work of Olweus (1991). Schott (2014) suggested that the main/dominant approaches of bullying could be categorized into three typologies: (a) as a form of individual aggression, (b) as a form of social violence, and (c) as a form of dysfunctional group dynamics. If we were to apply these

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typologies in family research regarding bullying/victimization, we could allocate the personality traits or individual qualities of parents and their children to the first category. Accordingly, our search for understanding family contribution to bullying inevitably looks for causal negative or risk family factors, most of the time, narrowing it down to the individual characteristics of children and parents.

An individualistic formulation of bullying, which is widespread in the literature, describes bullies as aggressive, impulsive, or dominating, and the victims respectively as passive, weak, insecure, and anxious. Consequently, these qualities are attributed to patterns of ineffective family functioning, such as poor child rearing, poor parental mental health, malformed, distorted, or at best unformed parental views and perceptions. In particular, mothers, being primarily responsible for the tasks of care-giving and upbringing, need to be studied; research factors mainly involved include (over/under) protection, warmth, psychological control, and permissiveness.

However, this approach assumes that the root of the problem lies outside the classroom with teachers coming to believe that what matters most has nothing to do with the school context or the complex group dynamics within it; rather, the cause is to be found outside the school environment and specifically in the personal characteristics of a student and their parents. The role of individual qualities or personality differences in human interaction is unambiguous and inarguable; however, these do not provide an analytical standpoint for a theory or an appropriate practice of bullying, since every individual interacts or intra-acts (Barad, as cited in Schott & Søndergaard, 2014) within group or interpersonal relations and is, at the same time, affected by these.

Regarding the definition of bullying as a mark of social violence, following Schott's categorization (2014), this assumes that the social causes of bullying (such as poverty, media representations, unemployment and risk culture rhetoric), interrelated with family life, potentially contribute to its initiation and maintenance. There is evidence to suggest that societal factors are risk factors for bullying victimization (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Callahan & Eyberg, 2010). Indicatively, Leinonen, Solantaus, and Punakaki (2002) found that economic hardship defined as general and specific economic pressures, potentially, lead to parental mental health deterioration and marital hostility. This cycle influences the quality of parenting in line with previous findings, leading to acts of bullying (Malm & Henrich, 2019; Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1993).

Descriptions of parents exercising poor parenting through the practice of too much or too little love, too much anger or disregard and so on, become normative representations of family lives which are displaced from their micro and macro sociological factors. On the other hand, it is a fact that children and adolescents, most times, move in and out of the positions of bully, victim, or observer, needing an answer as to how and why. In accordance with this second category, the relationship between family studies and bullying is examined through the structural and/or contextual family factors that interpret bullying through the transference of its sources beyond the classroom.

Regarding the third category that frames bullying as a form of dysfunctional dynamics, the research focuses on social interactions, group identity, moral positioning, sense of belonging, and hierarchy status. In a related way, family dynamics, the youth's moral reasoning development, families as promoting children's trust in other social contexts (e.g., peer groups or school communities) have been examined in association with bullying

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victimization. However, taking into consideration that bullying incidence and prevalence is rather high across cultures, an approach based on dysfunctions, potentially, might pathologize human social and group interaction and is imbued with normative perceptions.

Additionally, the origin of the dominant bullying definition includes the components of intentionality and power being allocated to those involved in bullying practices, comprising the main protagonists in a dyadic relation. Let us think how these two components are associated with the family's contribution to bullying and in what ways they might act as facilitating or challenging the family's responsibility to actively participate in dealing with it. First, critical approaches question or dispute intentionality as a central component of bullying (Rigby, 2002; Swearer, Espelage, & Napolitano, 2009; and see Chapter 4, this volume). For instance, it is hard for the parents to accept that their child wants to deliberately hurt his/her peers, as a principle, especially in their early years. We need to reflect on the possibility that intentionality could or might serve another purpose other than provoking deliberate harm. It might act as a sense of dominance, for instance, in the peer group or a maladaptive way of reacting to a fight (Schott, 2014). In this way, the social nature of bullying is clean of any purposeful malice and is recognized in terms of social safety and belonging.

Along with intentionality, power is another key component in the definition of bullying. According to the dominant bullying definition, power is to be negotiated, desired, or achieved between those who act as bullies and those who are acknowledged as victims. However, if we are to reflect on power dynamics and its relation to family life, we need, for instance, to answer the question of how power functions in a family versus an institutional context, such as the school within the group members of a classroom. In other words, in the cases where bullying victimization is experienced, who has the power and why do they use it within the family, or between the parents and staff at school meetings? Do parents have the power to change teachers' perceptions regarding their child's involvement in bullying or not? It is safer to assume that power relations are dynamic and flexible, ranging from dominant to submissive, and depend on different structural, contextual, and relational factors, an assumption well-documented in social psychology, sociology, and social theory research (Schott & Søndergaard, 2014).

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Parental Factors and Bullying/Victimization

It has been well-documented that parents' views regarding their children's bullying are crucial components in planning and implementing anti-bullying programs (Eslea & Smith, 2000; Farrington & Ttofi, 2009; McNeely, Whitlock, & Libbey, 2010). However, there is scant literature regarding parents' perceptions, even less for early childhood. Parental perspectives are examined and represented mainly through students' or teachers' reports (Bibou-Nakou et al., 2013; Hein, 2014; Karga et al., 2013). Indicatively, in the qualitative study by Bibou-Nakou et al. (2013), which examined the ways in which the issue of bullying is discursively organized among young adolescent students in Greece in relation to related family factors, three themes emerged: (a) difficult home

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environment with many conflicts between the couple, or the parents and the young adolescent(s), (b) parental overprotection and excessive control versus lack of supervision, and (c) domestic abuse.

Parents' perspectives significantly influence the ways they react in the case of their children's involvement in bullying practices (Sawyer et al., 2011). Harcourt et al. (2014) postulate that research has mostly focused on establishing a correlation between parenting, family functioning and relations, and children's involvement in bullying. This line of research assumes a widespread belief that children's behavior at school is directly dependent on their upbringing and home situation, implicitly attributing blame and responsibility to the home, on the part of the teachers. On the other hand, frustrated parents worrying about their children put the blame on schools, maintaining a loop of dysfunctional attributions and cultivating mistrust. From the study by Harcourt et al. (2014), it was confirmed that parents would not know about their child's experiences of bullying, if the child did not tell them. Further, this source of information coincides with teachers', classmates', and the other parents' accounts, providing diversified interpretations and understandings. Parents were found to normalize bullying, or define it as the "victim's problem." Mothers' feelings of anger, helplessness, frustration, or guilt in the cases where their children had been involved in bullying clearly indicated the need for more information and school support in order to deal with the phenomenon of bullying.

In a qualitative study examining parents' and practitioners' talk regarding early life bullying victimization, Sims-Schouten (2015) highlighted the existence of normative beliefs of bullying as a natural way of growing up, or dismissive beliefs that undermined the impact of bullying on children's suffering and overall psychosocial functioning. Ju and Lee (2019) interviewed South Korean mothers' perceptions and experiences of bullying during early childhood. The mothers' boundary for distinguishing between bullying and other negative acts, such as fighting or joking was unclear; this boundary was also mediated by the mothers' differing standpoints as *aggressors'* or *victims'* mothers. The mothers were afraid that sharing their children's victimization/bullying experiences might exclude them from the other mothers' social encounters or label them as overprotective or indifferent. According to Stives et al. (2019), the parents' own bullying victimization experiences influence their main perspectives in relation to their children.

Nocentini, Fiorentini, Di Paola, and Menesini (2019) systematically reviewed 154 studies from 1970 through November 2017, on family factors and their contribution to bullying. They distinguished between family *contextual factors*, such as parental mental health, and domestic violence, *relationships* within family life, such as parenting styles, and the *individual qualities* of family functioning, such as parental beliefs, views, values, as well as coping and social skills. Nocentini et al. (2019) state that the majority of family research on bullying has been based on relational family dynamics, with more frequent variables being parental involvement/support, inadequate parenting, parental monitoring/supervision, and warmth/affection. Overall, in the examination of these particular dynamics, most of the reviewed studies confirmed the following protective factors: authoritative parenting, mainly in victimization experiences; family disclosure and communication, mainly in bullying; parental support and involvement for bullying victimization; warmth and affection, mainly for bullying; supervision and high levels of family control for bullying/cyberbullying; and abuse/neglect for victimization/bullying

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(or the aggressive victims of bullying, according to Schwartz, Proctor, & Chien, 2001). In relation to the contextual factors, family violence and conflict have been significantly associated with bullying practices. Individual parental factors, such as parental coping strategies and self-efficacy, have been associated more with bullying than with victimization. The authors, based on the multivariate analysis of these different family levels, point out the interplay between them and the need for corresponding multilevel prevention/intervention strategies for bullying victimization.

In studies on adolescent students, Martínez, Murgui, Garcia, and Garcia (2019), in Spain, found a positive association between low levels of bullying/cyberbullying and indulgent parenting, in contrast to authoritarian parenting. Overall, indulgent parenting comprising acceptance and involvement practices, has been associated with the lowest levels of bullying/victimization, especially for boys involved in traditional bullying, with the authoritative parenting being equally helpful, regardless of gender. In Portugal, Martins, Veiga Simão, Freire, Caetano, and Matos (2016) found that family support (family dialogue, parental support, and information sharing) was a strong predictive factor of less cyber-victimization in adolescents, whereas lack of family rules predicted significantly more cyber-aggression. In a longitudinal study in Cyprus, Charalampous et al. (2018) highlighted the mediating effect of parental styles on both bullying and cyberbullying on peer attachment relationships.

Navarro (2019) edited a special volume for the review and discussion of family in the context of bullying/cyberbullying, confirming most of these findings. Reviewing the literature from 2016 to 2018, López-Castro and Priegue (2019) highlighted an increase in publications regarding cyberbullying. From the review of structural factors, family conflict forms a significant predictor of cyberbullying, whereas the evidence regarding families' economic status and parents' education level and employment appears to be conflicting. In relation to individual parental processes, such as parental perceptions and values, there were limited studies with contradictory findings. From the dynamic variables, parental mediation needed more clarification in relation to the role of rules, monitoring, and active or restrictive mediation. On the other hand, open and dialogic communication, family cohesion, and authoritative parental style formed strong protective factors against cyberbullying. López-Castro and Priegue (2019) concluded that the contributions of structural factors are more controversial in comparison to dynamic variables.

Gómez-Ortiz et al. (2019) examined normative, indulgent, and punitive democratic parental styles and bullying victimization experiences. They highlighted the significant interplay between family qualities, such as a sense of humor, mutual enjoyment between children and parents, along with behavioral and psychological control, disciplinary management and promotion of autonomy for the understanding of bullying/cyberbullying.

In their study on adolescent students, Romero-Abrio, León-Moreno, Musitu-Ferrer, and Villarreal- González (2019) found that good family functioning was associated with less cyberbullying. Álvarez-García, García, and Suárez-García (2018) confirmed the positive effects of parental control in cases of cyberbullying, coupled with a democratic parenting style, open and warm relationships, as well as the enhancement of the young person's autonomy.

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Baek, Roberts, Seepersad, and Swartz (2018), in a review study, examined the role of family violence on bullying through a gender perspective on a sample of 8–14-year-old students. Their study is based on the General Strain Theory, which supposes that the stress children experience is related to emotions like anger or depression, that in turn facilitate the enactment of bullying victimization.

Cassidy, Faucher, and Jackson (2019), reviewing the international literature on cyberbullying, focused on parents' role regarding its prevention, and they found that education, home-school partnerships, monitoring of computer usage, and parent-child communication were facilitating factors in addressing cyberbullying practices.

Doty, Gower, Sieving, Plowman, and McMorris (2019) confirmed that parental connectedness – more than parental monitoring – is related to lower rates of youth cyberbullying practices; in addition, the lack of a salient and explicit parent-youth communication complicates young people's feelings of affiliation with their classmates, as well as their feelings of self-efficacy and their social reputation (Ortega Baron, Postigo, Iranzo, Buelga, & Carrascosa, 2018).

Grant, Merrin, King, and Espelage (2019) examined peer deviance, that is, peer involvement engaging in violent/aggressive behavior, and exposure to interpersonal family violence in relation to bullying victimization, among a sample of adolescent students attesting to existing associations between these variables. The significant contribution of the study is that it showed the prominence of the dynamic fluctuation in bullying engagement depending on students' exposure to violence in a family and peer context.

In relation to *Attachment Theory*, in their review of the psychological factors that might explain bullying victimization, Hansen, Steenber, Palic, and Elkit (2012) confirmed the consistent associations between attachment and bullying, attachment and peer group attachment, and social competence skills. However, they failed to take into account the need for a bi-directional process, with secure attachment acting as a protective factor in bullying/victimization, as a way of influencing the quality of future attachment relations. Ward, Clayton, Barnes, and Theule (2018) undertook a meta-analysis of studies that investigated attachment as a process of an internal working model defining children's development in relation to bullying victimization. There was a somewhat indirect relationship between attachment and bullying victimization, mediated by other micro-level key variables, such as negative cognitive biases, social expectations, and low self-worth.

In relation to family interactions, bullying, and ethnicity, Zhu, Chan, and Chen (2018) verified the association of bullying victimization of adolescent students with family violence as evaluated by the participants' family abuse experiences and interpersonal family conflicts. Yu, Cheah, Hart, Yang, and Olsen (2019) focused on Chinese-American preschoolers and their first-generation mothers, examining parental psychological control through guilt induction and maternal love withdrawal. They highlighted the impact of parenting on bullying victimization, noting a significant association between maternal love withdrawal and higher levels of bullying, as well as guilt induction as a deterrent for bullying involvement. The acknowledgment of bullying as moral misconduct in the culture of Chinese-American parents explains the use of guilt induction as a way of enhancing children's interpersonal awareness and parental respect. Xu, Macrynikola, Waseem, and Miranda (2020) reviewed relevant cross-cultural research on bullying with

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inconclusive findings regarding its prevalence. However, they found that family interactions, such as low parental support, family violence, and low family satisfaction might act as risk factors for bullying involvement across racial and ethnic variables.

Parents, Coping, and Bullying Victimization

Different typologies of coping based on classical theories, such as Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model and Roth and Cohen's (1986) Approach Avoidance Model, have been suggested in order to examine and conceptualize parents' and children's coping in relation to bullying victimization. Hunter, Mora-Merchan, and Ortega (2004) define coping as the cognitive and behavioral effects used to address internal or external demands resulting from stressful events, claiming that the Transactional Model is appropriate when attempting to understand children's processes in dealing with bullying victimization experiences. On the other hand, social support within the family, or other context (such as peers), has most of the times been evaluated as a coping mechanism associated with bullying victimization.

Coping has been further acknowledged as an intentional reaction or an automatic way of addressing stressful situations and has been examined in relation to age, sex, forms, duration, and frequency of bullying, and its effects on alleviating stress (Hunter et al., 2004). Overall, addressing bullying victimization in active, energetic ways, has been deemed a valuable and appropriate way of reacting, although there are significant differences in terms of the positioning/identities of all students involved (Bradbury, Dubow, & Domoff, 2018; Hunter et al., 2004; Machackova, Cerna, Sevcikova, Dedkova, & Daneback, 2013).

Abeid and Rudolph (2010, 2011) have examined the ways parents – and especially mothers – influence their children in responding to stress based on the concept of the socialization of coping. According to them, the socialization of coping refers to explicit, effortful responses through instruction or coaching, or implicit, effortful, or involuntary behaviors, though modeling the parents' coping mechanisms, in their attempts to alleviate the impact of stressful events on their children. Abeid and Rudolph (2010), based on the association of parents' coping with children's self-report strategies (Conners-Burrow, Johnson, Whiteside-Mansell, McKelvey, & Gargus, 2009), stated that mild stress mobilizes different child resources in comparison to severe stress, encouraging less parental focus and guidance in cases of minor stressful conditions and demanding higher parental engagement in cases of high levels of stress. In their studies (Abeid & Rudolph, 2010, 2011), they found that parental suggestions for disengagement coping undermined adolescents' well-being when the latter were experiencing severe interpersonal stress, and that maternal engagement suggestions for peer stress situations contributed to fewer involuntary disengagement reports with young students who were experiencing high levels of peer stress.

Bradbury et al. (2018) similarly adopted the socialization of coping model and examined adolescents' ways of coping in the cases of cyberbullying. They found that the way

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adolescents perceive parental or peer coping has an impact on the choice of their own strategies, especially during adolescence. Interestingly, parental influence continues to significantly impact adolescents' behaviors, along with peer coaching.

Karga et al. (2013), with a sample of 1,127 Greek parents, found that the most preferred strategy in the cases where their child(ren) had being bullied was disclosure. In the case of a bullied child, the parents seem to opt for a solution outside the family, informing the school. In the case of their child acting as a bully, parents would mainly look for solutions within the family by adopting an individually tailored approach toward their child; they would definitely avoid seeking help from the community or other parents. This might be attributed to the fact that many parents feel ashamed of their child's negative behavior, or are apprehensive that the school staff will blame them as being inadequate parents (Bibou-Nakou et al., 2013).

Larrañaga, Yubero, and Navarro (2019) studied parents' responses regarding their adolescent children's victimization experiences and found that parents were more directive with young children, but they minimized girls' bullying experiences as mild or nonexistent that needed to be ignored. Stives et al. (2019) examined parents' responses in cases where their child suffered bullying victimization. The strategies found to be helpful were that the victimized children needed to ask for help from a teacher, or to avoid the bully. These results mirrored the ways schools tend to address bullying incidents.

Concluding, family coping needs to be further examined in relation to mediating and moderating factors such as the way children/adolescents perceive social support as existent, effective, or trustful, along with their beliefs about sharing information with their social support networks. Students with long-term experience of victimization report more fear than those who had been bullied once or for a short period of time (Hansen, Henningsen, & Kofoed, as cited in Schott & Søndergaard, 2014). Further, there is sound evidence on gender differences in coping, such as girls seeking support and telling someone about being victimized more than boys, who tend to react aggressively, blame themselves, or keep it to themselves. As Hunter et al. (2004) claim, the question of why some coping strategies work better for some children/adolescents in specific situations needs to be answered within a developmental and socio-ecological framework.

Additionally, coping needs to be examined in relation to emotion regulation and emotional competence (Rutherford, Wallace, Laurent, & Mayes, 2015). According to Rutherford et al. (2015), children's socialization of emotion regulation is believed to be practiced through direct and indirect parental methods across childhood development: children learn by observing parental emotion regulation practices, and parenting practices, such as parental conditional regard, as well as through the family's emotional climate, facilitating distress management. Hymel, Schonert-Reichl, Bonanno, Vaillancourt, and Henderson (2010) examined bullying victimization in relation to children's moral development within the family context. They stressed the need for acknowledging children's and adolescents' morality as a gradual process developing in collective or normative beliefs within the family and school contexts.

Further research assessing family emotional regulation as an organizing construct of the socialization of emotions between parents and children, within a broader social-ecological framework, would be valuable.

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Parents as partners in school programs

Huang, Espelage, Polanin, and Hong (2019) carried out a meta-analysis of studies from 2000 until 2017, examining the effectiveness of school based anti-bullying programs with a parental component. They identified five main forms of parental involvement: (a) the school providing information and resources to families, (b) enhancing school discipline by involving parents in raising awareness and suggesting adequate strategies, (c) home activities with the school initiative of actively involving parental participation, (d) enhancing communication between teachers and parents, and (e) parental training through workshops focusing on child development and parenting skills. According to Huang et al. (2019), the content and goals of this practice involving parents and schools in a trustful collaboration remain in question, overall, as they seem to lack confiding and empowering relations for all involved. The authors critically discuss the absence of a meaningful parental contribution to school-based programs, attributing it to school perceptions well-founded on psychological theories about ineffective or dysfunctional family lives.

Hein (2014) examined 12 Danish parents' perceptions regarding the efforts of school staff to help their children (aged from 7 to 15 years) who were experiencing bullying behaviors in their public schools. From interviews with the parents, the researcher found that the expectations of parents, that their collaborating with school staff would help the child who was bullied, were not met. On the contrary, the parents stated that the child's position at school worsened, and that they themselves felt frustrated and discouraged from continuing any further collaboration with the school. According to Hein (2014), parents find themselves caught in the middle in their attempt to balance between being a caring parent and a legitimate partner in the school-family project. The parents claimed that they were told to work on changing their child outside of school or to deal with issues in their family life. Should the parents challenge these perceptions, they are at risk of being labeled as "that type of parent" who gets too involved in their child's school life.

On the other hand, it also needs to be acknowledged that parents in the guise of protecting their children can bully teachers (Billet, Fogelgarn, & Burns, 2019; Küçüksüleymanoglu, 2019), depending for example on their expectations over how schools should respond to bullying (Rigby, 2019), their perceptions of the school climate (Sjursø, Fandrem, O'Higgins Norman, & Roland, 2019), or their negative judgments regarding teachers' ways of responding to student bullying victimization.

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Bystanders and Bullying

Lately, there has been increasing recognition of the bystanders' roles, supporting the active involvement of bystanders in effective interventions. According to Twemlow, Fonagy, and Sacco (2010), bystanders unavoidably take on an active role, since they engage between "victims" and "victimizers." They can present a range of roles co-created partly by the social context they are in, and dependent on the power dynamics and processes within the peer groups.

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Rose, Nickerson, and Stormont (2015) document that bystander intervention reduces bullying victimization rates and fosters a sense of safety, solidarity, and standing up to the peer group. In a study focusing on understanding family factors in relation to observers' initiative to defend those being bullied, Valdés-Cuervo, Alcántar-Nieblas, Martínez-Ferrer, and Parra-Pérez (2018) argued that most of the research on bystanders has considered individual characteristics, peer relations, and the school context. Less attention has been attributed to emotions experienced during aggressive events that might lead to active engagement in ending a conflict, despite the documented association between parenting practices and children's emotion regulation and competence (Li, Li, Wu, & Wang, 2019). Valdés-Cuervo et al. (2018) examined restorative discipline as a potential factor related to the defender role. Based on a parent-driven model of socialization and restorative justice theory, they found that the combination of restorative discipline, positive family climate, and parental support is associated with the moral emotions of empathy and shame, which, in turn, lead adolescents to take on a defending role. In addition, parental admonition without stigmatization, in cases of adolescent misbehavior, was related to reflection on the part of the young person and their willingness to repair any harm done.

Moral emotions and judgments, though, do not necessarily lead to active prosocial behavior (Bandura, 2002), despite the fact that empathy and shame have been associated with a greater engagement of observers in defense of the bullied victim (Eisenberg, Eggum, & Di Giunta, 2010; Thornberg, 2017). Mulvey et al. (2019) examined adolescents' perceptions on family management, school climate, and discriminatory practices in relation to two types of bystander intervention: (a) intervention in response to bullying acts and (b) in response to bystanders' awareness of the victim's plans for retaliation. They showed that bystanders' engagement was reinforced by positive family management practices, which foster open dialogue and family support in both types of bystander intervention. Participants who perceived their family context as supportive and their school context fighting discriminatory practices engaged in active positive bystander responses.

Wright and Wachs (2019) examined parental mediation as a moderating factor in the long-term association between being a bystander and a victim of cyberbullying. Specifically, mediation strategies, such as setting time and content limits on children's media use, along with restrictive (e.g., lack of access to certain content), instructive (e.g., parents actively discussing online content with their children), and co-viewing strategies were studied in relation to rates and impact of cyberbullying. The researchers found that parental mediation of technology use had a significant impact on the bystander's involvement in cyberbullying one year later, and might well function as a form of social support (see also Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig, & Ólafsson, 2011).

Twemlow et al. (2010) are strongly in favor of group members engaging in acts of support when they are in the position of bystander. They draw on mentalization theory and the psychodynamic approach to group dynamics in order to get to grips with the position of bystanders during bullying victimization. Mentalization is defined as one's capacity to reflect, empathize, control feelings, and set boundaries in one's relationships and is based on the notion that we define ourselves through social feedback on the ways we interact with others. Parents contribute significantly to children's mentalization process (Fonagy, 2001). In short, by using the mechanism of dissociation, Twemlow et al.

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(2010) argue in favor of the need to empower bystanders through processes of recognition, empathy, and altruism. In this way, they frame the bystander's position as a role, and not as amoral accusation or a clinical diagnosis.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

From a social-ecological perspective, bullying is acknowledged as a social phenomenon resulting from the complex interactions of the individual, the family, school, and social factors. We need more studies that examine parents and the family in relation to bullying as the end product of complex, nuanced, and diversified intersections of macro and micro social-cultural factors with personal, individual qualities. Despite the recognition that children's socialization in the family context is a bidirectional process, the main body of research has continued to emphasize the parents' role as active and the children as passive (Davidof, Knafo-Noam, Serbin, & Moss, 2015). On the other hand, a limited number of studies have focused on parents' perceptions of bullying victimization in order to take them into consideration for the implementation of successful programs (Yang, Sharkey, Chen, & Jimerson, 2019).

The reduction of bullying in terms of individual characteristics or family dysfunction and pathology is not helpful in providing adequate solutions; instead, this kind of reduction underestimates the family's attempts to help their children, and designates the dominant conceptualization of bullying victimization, as explained by individual characteristics, as inadequate. This is not to reject the possible impact of children's and their parents' individual qualities, as well as their sometimes vulnerable life trajectories, on acts of bullying; but to use this as a dominant analytical framework on the part of teachers seems ineffective. In other words, teachers' attributions regarding bullying to the individual characteristics of the child or his/her parental upbringing escalate the risk of ineffective practices for bullying and disempower collaboration between schools and families.

The gradual shift in research should focus on a modified ecological model that integrates contributions from social psychology, sociology, and the new sociology of children (Migliaccio & Rakauskas, 2015; Schott & Søndergaard, 2014), emphasizing the sense of belonging to/being excluded from a social group, as well as the interactions between members, cultural norms, and power relations. Bullying provokes powerful feelings. Children's, parents', and teachers' emotions in their meetings need to be recognized as social affective practices, being embedded in the cultural politics of emotions at a socially widespread level (Lasky, 2000). The existence of a social and emotional climate of learning in schools as well as the enhancement of social affiliation and recognition of the needs of all involved in bullying victimization are of enormous help for dealing with bullying.

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