BULLIES, VICTIMS, BYSTANDERS: HOW DO THEY REACT DURING ANTI-BULLYING SESSIONS?

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DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)

1999
This work is dedicated to all the children who participated in this study.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I sincerely thank Prof. Peter K. Smith and Prof. Helen Cowie for their teaching and their affection. Without them this work would have not been possible.
I am grateful to Prof. Maria Luisa Genta for her useful supervision and her friendship.
Thanks to Dott. Marco Dondi for his indispensable help and to the students who assisted me in collecting data and in coding them.
I thank Belinda Stolt for her wonderful ability in correcting my written English always respecting the sense I meant!
Thanks also to Riccardo Draghi-Lorenz for his special support and suggestions.
I am particularly grateful to all the teaching staff of the Scuola Elementare "Clasio" in Scarperia and to the children's parents for their availability, their participation and their enthusiasm.
Finally, I would like to thank my parents, my sister and all my family and friends who believed in me.
ABSTRACT

This study was carried out during an intervention program tackling bullying in classrooms. The study's main aim was the exploration of emotional expressions (verbal and nonverbal) of bullies, victims and bystanders, the hypothesis being that these children react in emotionally different ways.

The intervention program was carried out in an Italian elementary school over a period of 8 months. The sample of the study included 6 experimental classes (in which intervention strategies were carried out) and 3 control classes (in which the normal curriculum was used). Peer nominations were used to single out bully, victim and bystander children. In experimental classes Cooperative Group Work (CGW) was carried out once a week. This was video-recorded and so was children's behaviour in the playground. Using these videos children were interviewed at the beginning and at the end of the intervention by means of Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR, Kagan and Kagan, 1991). These interviews were also video-recorded, and then analysed using content analysis for the verbal emotional expressions and the Maximally Discriminative Facial Movement Coding System (MAX, Izard, 1979) for facial expressions. Moreover, naturalistic observation in the playground was carried out using a behavioural check list, again at the beginning and at the end of the intervention.

Results show that during IPR victims displayed significantly less verbal and nonverbal emotional expressions than bullies and bystanders, and that the latter showed indifference towards victims' experience. In the last interview more empathy and more awareness about their own and the others' emotions was found in most children. Some bullies and some victims did not show any change in the considered behaviours. Both victims and bystanders showed improvement of social skills during playground activities.

Finally, peer nomination scores of bullies and victims of experimental classes significantly improved compared to those of control classes.
INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a complex problem that involves children at school, and that researchers have been studying and tackling with practical interventions for several years (Olweus, 1991; Smith, Boulton, & Cowie, 1993; Sharp & Smith, 1994; Pepler, Craig, Ziegler, & Charach, 1994; Cowie & Sharp, 1996; Menesini & Smorti, 1997). The first aspect that fascinated me in studying a phenomenon like bullying was that, at the same time, the researcher can observe and explore the problem itself, but can also find practical approaches to solving it through different techniques of intervention. This kind of research is not only a theoretical area in which the use of empirical data are helpful to understand and to know the phenomenon, but it is also focused on improving a situation, helping someone and influencing the phenomenon itself. This gave a lot of sense to my work.

Recent literature on bullying discusses several anti-bullying strategies used in schools to tackle this social problem and a range of methodologies to check the effectiveness of those techniques (Olweus, 1993; Pepler et al., 1993; 1994; Cowie & Sharp, 1992; Sharp & Smith, 1994; Smith & Sharp, 1994; Tatum & Lane, 1989; Cowie, Smith, Boulton, & Laver, 1994; Menesini & Smorti, 1997). In order to achieve these aims, almost all these studies check the outcomes, through children's behavioural and attitudinal changes after a period in which they were involved in an anti-bullying project. Besides the outcomes of the strategies of anti-bullying interventions, there is another very important aspect of them to be explored: their process. What exactly happens during the implementation of anti-bullying techniques? Which are children's reactions during the process of an anti-bullying strategy? It is my belief that the answers to these questions provide the fundamentals to understanding what could be done to improve the strategies of intervention or to focus them on specific cultural and social situations. Moreover, a study focused on the process of anti-bullying techniques and on children's reactions during them, can also offer the possibility to know more about bullies, victims and
bystanders. This approach could also be a methodology to study and to observe the phenomenon of bullying and its leading characteristics.

In line with this the first stage is to explore in detail what happens during those interviews. How do children react? How do they behave in that situation? The following study mainly explores children's emotional and behavioural reactions during the process of two sessions of an anti-bullying intervention (lasting 8 months in total), through data collected at the beginning and at the end of this period. In order to be able to specifically observe bullies', victims' and bystanders' emotional expressions in an intervention situation, the anti-bullying project was based on a particular integration of different techniques: cooperative group work in the classroom with teachers, and group interviews (Interpersonal Process Recall, by Kagan and Kagan, 1991) focused on the recalling of a video recorded group activity undertaken with me. Other research questions concern the differences among bully, victim and bystander children in expressing their emotions and feelings and also consider whether their style of verbal and non verbal expressions changes after a period of intervention.

Some studies suggest that bullies lack empathy, have a high self-esteem and are usually very aggressive to others (Olweus, 1978; 1991; Pulkkinen & Tremblay, 1992), while victims tend to be submissive and to display signs of pain and suffering (Patterson, Littman & Bricker, 1976; Perry, Williard & Perry, 1990). From these statements it could be predicted that bullies and victims also demonstrate these behaviours and show these emotions during the group recalling of a shared activity. Observing oneself, especially during a critical interaction, is likely to involve the emotions. Thus, questions to be considered include: do bullies express more negative emotions (such as anger or contempt) during those sessions, compared to bystander children? Do victims, by contrast, overtly express fear and uneasiness? Also after a period of intervention is it possible to find some differences in these forms of emotional expressions in each category of children
(bully, victim and bystander)? If this is the case the question also arises of how to measure such responses.

It is also of interest to explore possible differences within each category of bullies and victims. As already stated in other hypotheses (Pepler & Craig, 1995), it would be possible to find different subgroups of bully and victim children with, for instance, chronic behavioural problems and only circumstantial social difficulties.

Consequently, there are other research questions: is the conventional anti-bullying intervention in the classroom equally effective for all the children? Or within the categories of bully and victim are there some who are not helped by the intervention and who, by contrast, would need a more individual and focused therapy?

This study has, of course, several limitations, first of all the fact that, being an exploration of a "real" setting (different classes with different teachers, who chose different anti-bullying strategies into their curriculum, for instance), it cannot offer complete control of all the variables. However, this is at the same time the originality of this study, because only by observing "real" situations, without using experimental settings, it is possible to understand how children change under the effect of an anti-bullying process. These are the difficulties and limitations of similar projects, and it is intended that my study might provide insight which could be used to plan other interventions in the future.

This thesis is divided into 8 chapters. In chapter 1, I examine the problem of bullying in the wider theoretical context of peer relationships. Hence, the first section of the chapter overviews the current literature about those aspects of peer relationships that in my opinion are important to introduce and understand the phenomenon of bullying. Some methodologies generally used to study and observe children in peer groups are also discussed. The next section specifically concerns bullying and it is focused on an overview of the recent studies carried out in different countries about this problem as well as its nature and principal aspects.
As I am particularly interested in the emotional implications in children involved in anti-bullying interventions, the emotional aspects are introduced in chapter 2 and I explore their relationship with the problem of bullying through current methodologies used to study emotions. I also try to understand the emotional impact on bullies, victims and bystanders during bullying episodes, and their emotional difficulties, and consider how it might be possible to change them.

Chapter 3 concerns anti-bullying interventions in schools described by current literature. The different methodologies used in order to tackle this problem are analysed and my findings are used to refer to the problems discussed in the two previous chapters.

In chapter 4 I analyse the methodology used to carry out the present study, which concerned an anti-bullying intervention in an Italian school. Thus, Chapter 4 describes the sample, the cooperative strategies, and the methodology used to analyse the data. In chapter 5, I present a specific extension of these descriptions, focusing the attention on the different intervention processes carried out class by class in the experimental group. After this presentation, the assumption that the experimental classes can be considered as an homogeneous group in order to carry out statistical analysis is also discussed.

In chapter 6 quantitative results are presented, through the use of statistics on the comparison between control and experimental classes, and also involves a more specific exploration of the experimental classes involved in IPR and video-recorded during the playtime. This involved study of the verbal and non verbal expression of emotions during the sessions of IPR, and of the natural behaviour which was observed in the playground at the beginning and at the end of the period of intervention.

A more qualitative analysis of the conversations among children and their answers to the IPR questions is presented in chapter 7. The use of quotes from children's discussions were included in order to understand more deeply what was going on during the two sessions of IPR and to highlight how bullies, victims and
bystanders reacted to the situation and to signal improvements in skills such as expressing themselves and actively listening to the others. Moreover, four specific cases (of two bullies and two victims) are discussed to explore and try to understand two evidently positive impacts of IPR and the group activities on a bully and on a victim, and two more difficult and serious situations, in which changes, over the same period of time, were not so evident.

Finally, in chapter 8 there is a conclusive discussion about the study, which uses analysis and confirmed findings of other research, but also considers its limitations and any innovative results. Final conclusions will include proposals for future research on this topic.
PEER RELATIONSHIPS AND BULLYING

Introduction

Bullying is a social phenomenon currently very much analysed and discussed. Research literature shows its complex aspects, different characteristics and types and how these depend on the social contexts, gender and age of the children involved. Certainly it is a very serious phenomenon, and there are still many unknown elements concerning it.

A common and basic definition of the phenomenon is offered by Olweus (1989): 'Bullying/mobbing occurs when youths are subjected to physical and/or mental violence and oppression from other children and youths during somewhat long periods of time'.

In order to understand bullying better, and to study different and effective methodologies for tackling it, it is important to know the social context in which bullying develops. Bullying happens in school classrooms and is based on hierarchical and power rules within a group. It is a particular form of aggressive behaviour and the most serious episodes often happen during free play situations where there is inadequate adult supervision. An extensive literature exists concerning all these aspects of peer relationships, (aggressive behaviour, friendships, dominance and submission, characteristics of school groups, and so on). The literature is based on different theoretical and methodological approaches and these have deepened our understanding of bullying and the whole context of peer relationships within which bullying develops.

The present chapter presents an overview of the current literature and this is effected in two parts. The first one concerns specific areas of peer relationships and these were chosen in the belief that they have importance in understanding the bullying phenomenon and the characteristics of children involved in it.

These chosen areas are:

1). Sociometric Status
The second section of this chapter is dedicated to the specific problem of bullying and examined this through an overview of the most important literature about this subject.

The different aspects of this phenomenon tackled in this section are:

1. Bullying in school.
2. Bully and victim children.
4. Types of bullying.

1. Peer relationships

1.1. Sociometric status

The study of sociometric status involves a typical technique used in the last decade of psychological research. To study peer interaction in a fixed large group, such as a school class can be, it is very important to identify children's perception of the other's social role.

Coie, Dodge and Coppotelli (1982) asked 8 to 14 year olds in USA both whom they liked most in the class and whom they liked least. They found that liking and disliking were not polar opposites, at least as far as the class consensus was concerned. In fact, they found "popular" children who were both liked and not disliked, and some "rejected" children who were both disliked and not liked. However, they also found other possible situations and these were categorized in the following way: "controversial" children, who are liked by some and disliked by others and "neglected" children, whom no one picks out either to like or dislike. Together with "average" (and sometimes "other") categories, these form five or six
sociometric status types. This was a very important selection out of the many possibilities inside the classroom to define a child's social situation and is much more detailed than the simple popular-unpopular axis of a sociogram.

Coie et al. (1982) showed that popular children were seen by classmates as leaders, but also as children who co-operate and are not aggressive or disruptive. Rejected children, by contrast, are aggressive, but do not have the leadership skills to compensate. Neglected children are neither leaders, nor co-operative, nor aggressive. The controversial children are best seen in contrast to the popular and rejected children and display a profile that combines features of these two groups. The controversial children were similar to the rejected children in being perceived as disruptive and starting fights. They were also frequently nominated by peers for the ability to "seek help". On the other hand, they were perceived, as were the popular children, as being leaders in the peer group. They were not perceived as being cooperative in the way that popular children were viewed by peers, but neither were viewed as lacking seriously in this behaviour, as were the rejected children. Rather they were perceived as similar to average children in this regard.

Further studies have been carried out on these sociometric distinctions. Ladd, (1983), observing 8 and 9 year olds in the playground, found important differences in the behaviours and peer networks of popular, average, and rejected children. The behavioural profiles constructed from playground observations were highly similar for popular and average status children and easily distinguished from those of rejected children. Overall, rejected children (compared to popular and average children) spent less time in co-operative play and social conversation, and more time in arguing and fighting. They tended to play in smaller groups. Rejected children were also less positive and more negative in their peer interactions than were average children. Moreover, rejected children spent significantly more time alone and unoccupied on the playground than did popular or average children, and paralleled average children in the amount of time spent watching others play. Thus, the peer perceptions do seem to be based on actual observable behaviours.
There is an ethical issue highlighted by the researchers' concern that the experience of categorizing peers in terms of disliking them might be distressing or hurtful for some members of the class, or might rebound to the detriment of disliked peers. However, studies so far (Hayvren and Hymel, 1984) have failed to find any adverse consequences of using these techniques.

Thus, sociometric status is now a much used index in different and complex studies and provides insight to better understand the dynamics of peer groups and relationships. Sociometric status is fundamental to the subsequent discussion because it can be a fundamental instrument to study mutual and non mutual friendships, or it can be a complementary index to study free play in peer groups and aggressive behaviours among peers.

1.2. Friendship
During the past two decades, the investigation of children's friendships has become at the same time independent from the study of peer relationships and also linked to them. Empirical work on children's friendships is built on the consensus that relationships with peers, and especially friends, make important contributions to the acquisition of skills and competencies (Asher & Gottman, 1981; Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995). Talking about task activities, Newcomb and Bagwell (1995), found that friends evidenced significantly greater amounts of social contact, talking, cooperation, and positive affect than non friends, and friends achieve a greater level of task performance than non friends. In particular, cross-sectional comparisons between children who have friends and those who do not, show that children who have friends are more socially competent and less troubled than children who do not; they are more sociable, cooperative, altruistic, self-confident, and less lonely (Hartup, 1993; Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995).

Newcomb and Bagwell (1995) note that there is still an insufficient number of studies that have been completed to allow for meta-analytic conclusions regarding children's communication during task activity, but the direction of the findings to
date suggests that friends may engage in more communication than non friends during the completion of tasks.

Another important finding is that friends may be more successful on tasks that require spontaneity and creativity yet may be less successful when the task requires adherence to a structure. In these latter situations, the high levels of affiliation between friends may be a distraction and thereby detract from performance. Not having friends is not always assessed in the same manner in these studies, but the results are consistent: not one set of data suggests that children with friends are worse off than children who do not have them.

In studying these relationships, the importance of considering how peer relations vary in their degree of liking and in their structural dimensions has become more and more evident.

Bukowski and Hoza (1989) cogently illuminated the distinction between two types of peer relations, namely popularity, or acceptance by the peer group, and the mutual relationship between two friends. They proposed that popularity is a group-oriented, unilateral concept that indexes the opinions of the group about the individual. In contrast friendship indexes a mutual relationship occurring between two individuals.

Hartup (1996) identifies four main ways which may be used to measure whether a child has friends or not. These are:
(a) by asking the children, their mothers or their teachers to name the child's friend and determining whether these choices are reciprocated; (b) by asking children to assess their liking for one another; (c) by observing the extent to which children seek and maintain proximity with one another; (d) by measuring reciprocities and co-ordinations in their social interaction. Concordances among various indicators turn out to be substantial, but method variance is also considerable; the "insiders" (the children themselves) do not always agree with the "outsiders" (teachers) or the observational record (Hartup, 1992; Howes, 1989).
Moreover Hartup (1996) remarks that some variation among measures derives from the fact that social attraction is difficult for outsiders to know about. Method variance also derives from special difficulties connected with self-reports: first, children without friends almost always can name "friends" when asked to do so (Ray & Cohen, 1996); second, friendship frequently seems to investigators to be a dichotomous condition (friend vs. non friend), whereas variation is more continuous (best friend/ good friend/ occasional friend/ not friend); third, whether these categories form a Guttman scale has not been determined, although researchers sometimes assume that they do (Doyle, Markiewicz & Hardy, 1994); fourth, the status of so-called unilateral or unreciprocated friendship choice is unclear.

Sometimes, when children's choices are not reciprocated, social interaction differs from when friendship choices are mutual; in other respects, the social exchange itself does not. Unilateral friends, for example, use tactics during disagreements with one another that are different from the ones used by mutual friends but similar to those used by non friends (e.g., standing firm). Simultaneously, conflict outcomes among unilateral friends (e.g. whether interaction continues) are more similar to those characterizing mutual friends than those characterizing non friends (Hartup, Laursen, Stewart, & Eastenson, 1988).

In literature on friendship relationships, researchers have used varying definitions to identify their friend and non-friend comparison groups. For the friend comparison group, the strongest bonds examined are mutual or reciprocal friendships, that is, those in which each group member of the dyad chooses the other as a best friend; as such the terms "mutual friendship" and "reciprocal friendship" are used very often as interchangeable in the literature (for example in the meta-analytic review by Newcomb and Bagwell, 1995). The friendship comparison group has also included unilateral relationships, and in these pairings, it is sufficient for one member of the dyad to choose the other as a best friend. Unilateral friends have most frequently been compared with reciprocal friends as an
assessment of the importance of reciprocity within the friend relationship. Less often, unilateral friends have been compared with acquaintances. However, investigators have not always explicitly stated whether the children in their friendship groups have mutual or unilateral relationships.

For the non friend comparison group, three types of relationships predominate. Acquaintances are classmates who do not choose one another either as best friend or as disliked peers. Although the acquaintanceship pairing represents the most prevalent non friend comparison group, dyads of both disliked peers - children who express mutual dislike for one another - and strangers - children who do not know one another - are also represented in the literature.

There is also a new classification system devised on the basis of family system theory (Shulman, 1993), in which well-functioning friendships are considered to be balanced between closeness and intimacy, on the one hand, and individuality, on the other. The family system model suggests three friendship types: 'interdependent' ones, with cooperation and autonomy equally balanced; 'disengaged' ones, in which friends are disconnected in spite of their efforts to maintain proximity with one another; and 'consensus-sensitive' or 'enmeshed' relationships, in which agreement and cohesion are maximized. Empirical data here are based largely on children's interactions in a cooperative task adapted from family systems research (Reiss, 1981) and these document the existence of interdependent and disengaged relationships - a promising beginning. As Hartup (1989) suggests, however, one has to be cautious, because friendship networks may not revolve around the same equilibrate axes as families do: emotional dynamics among relatives, and the ways they can change, develop, or transform, may be radically different compared to those existing among friends. Thus, even if this interpretation of friendship has interesting and stimulating elements, it has to been carefully considered.

Certainly the possible types of friendships change and vary depending on the children's age, even if age-related differences in friendship relations have received
both limited theoretical attention and inconsistent empirical consideration. As Hartup (1989) observed, what children expect from and think about their friendship relations have been more likely candidates for developmental study than have age-related behavioural and affective manifestations of friendship relations.

In general, young children base their notions about friendship on specific overt characteristics. Older children expand their ideas to include psychological constructs (Furman, 1982). For example, younger children are more concerned with activities they share with their friends. Common activities also provide foundations for friendships in middle childhood and adolescence; however, intimacy and other psychological concerns acquire importance in adolescence. Indeed, intimacy is often considered to be the key differentiation between friendships in middle childhood and adolescence (Hartup, 1993). But there are some typical characteristics that are common at any age, and they are correlated to the affective component usually manifested in more frequent smiling, looking, laughing, and touching among friends than among non friends. For example, children of 3 and 4 years old were examined in an Italian study at primary school (Attili et al., 1984). It was clear that every observed child created preferred relationships with other peers based on mutual cooperation and reciprocity, usually through cooperative play and special exchange of signals. The behaviour with these preferred friends was marked by physical closeness, smiles, laughs, offer of objects. These kinds of positive behavioural characteristics of the interactions between friends was found also in a study by Foot, Chapman and Smith (1977).

In older children, friends engage in more conversation and talking than do non friends. Moreover friends generally appear to evidence more similarity with one another than do non friends. Some similarities among friends, in Hartup's (1993) opinion, derive from the well-known tendency among human beings for choosing close associates who resemble themselves. Recent studies confirm that the similarity-attraction hypothesis applies to children: among elementary school children who began an experimental session as strangers, differential attraction was
evident in some groups. Within them, more social contact occurred between preferred than non-preferred partners, and correlation was higher between preferred than non-preferred partners in sociability and cognitive maturity of their play (Rubin, Lynch, Caplan, Rose-Krasnor, & Booth, 1994).

But Dishion and his colleagues (Dishion, Patterson, & Griesler, 1994) believe that social network concordances emerge through a process called "shopping" in which children and adolescents construct relationships that maximize interpersonal payoffs. Children are not believed to choose friends who are similar to themselves on a rational basis so much as on an experiential one. Accordingly, relationships become established when they "feel right".

Similar individuals cleave to one another more readily than dissimilar individuals because they are more likely to find common ground in both their activities and their conversations. Antisocial children are thus most likely to make friends with other antisocial children and, in so doing, their common characteristics merge to create a "dyadic antisocial trait". Hartup considers that

"selection thus acts simultaneously to determine the identity of the child's friends through two interlocking processes: (a) similarity and attraction occurring within dyads, and (b) assortative network formation occurring within groups. These processes undoubtedly combine differently from child to child affecting developmental outcome. Cooperative, friendly, non-aggressive children can choose friends resembling themselves from a wide array of choices; antisocial children can also choose their friends on the basis of similarity and attraction- but frequently from a more restricted range of social alternatives" (Hartup, 1993).

However, narrative reviewers' careful consideration of different aspects of similarity and different trajectories for the importance of these similarity types lacks, in Newcomb and Bagwell's (1995) opinion, strong empirical support. Investigators have often used global indexes of similarity encompassing aspects of behavioural, demographic, and personality similarity within a single variable.
Newcomb and Bagwell (1995) suggest that although similarity has been considered a feature of friendship since antiquity, the empirical literature does not allow us to go beyond the conclusion that friends are indeed more similar to one another than are non friends.

1.3. Peer culture.

The classroom is the typical context where children's interactions are studied, but it is very particular because has a strong influence on the kind of peer relationships which develop among children. In order to define the whole routine in which children build their interactions, within an organized structure as, for instance, primary school is, Corsaro (1979; 1981b; 1985; 1990) created the definition of "peer culture". The methodology of observation that Corsaro used was video-recording free play amongst children during playtime in their school. He discovered that routines occurring in playtime have two functions: the first is that it makes children do together something which they like; the second is that it fills the "empty" moments between an organized activity and the next one, so it represents a free space for children who, in that occasion, can organize themselves without the authority of adults. For example, to run after one another or to run together, is a typical routine of peer culture inside the primary school. In Corsaro's opinion, during routines like these peer culture is produced and shared, and in that the most social development is carried out.

Corsaro observed that usually children play in groups, and that when occasionally some child is alone, he or she tries to join the activity that the others are doing; in these cases the other children try to protect their play from the others' initiative. Very often it seems that there is a shared strategy based on the awareness that play interactions are typically very short, 5/10 minutes, and this obliges children to confront one another very often to be involved in a new group. On the other hand, children who are playing are used to being suddenly interrupted, because at any time playmates can go away and leave the play without informing
the others. A typical consequence of this is that children very soon are aware that their interactions are precarious and so they need to protect their play area from further interruptions. Adults very often react to this behaviour remarking that it is important to share school toys and space with all children and valuing the children's attitude as egocentrism, without, by contrast, understanding that very often it is a strategy to continue the started play activity.

In similar situations several strategies in children who want to join the others were observed by Corsaro, such as to arrive near the group and imitate the activity of others, even if the peers ignore their presence (parallel play), or to try to create a verbal relationship, and from that starting a common play. The responses to these kinds of strategies are different. Many times there are verbal refusals, and the reasons given are generally that the rules of the play do not include, for any reasons, the person who is asking to join, or that, maybe even for only that day, they are not friends. Corsaro says that this is because children, inside the school, join a culture that also concerns the idea of friendship and that this is greatly influenced by the organization of the school. In this sense, friendship has also an integrative function such as building solidarity and trust, gaining access to a group game and protecting the space for play.

To better explain the idea of "peer culture", Corsaro indicates some typical fantasy plays that children more frequently use to share, such as role play especially that concerning a story that children decided together. Usually in these stories there are all the fears that children have (being neglected and alone, the danger and the consequent rescue, death and resurrection and so on). All these themes represent very strong childhood fears and the ability to repeatedly simulate them with others is a way to gain reassurance.

1.4. Play

In this context, it is appropriate to mention some studies carried out about this very special topic. Children's play world is a very complex field, about which a lot of
controversial theories still exist. In this section I consider only some forms of play that could help us to understand children involved in bullying episodes.

A common research finding is that generally victims are used to spending the playtime alone, in a stationary play, and very often in solitary play, while bullies are very often involved in rough-and-tumble play, a playful but very lively activity. Next I review the previous research concerning these two particular aspects of children's play and the differing points of view depending on the theoretical approach to them.

Smith and Connolly (1972) described the development of social participation in children as a continuum from solitary play to parallel play, and then to group play, defining this last as proper social play because it is dependent on the interaction among several children. Roper and Hinde (1976) contested this idea of social participation. A constancy in children's style of interaction and communication was found, while Blurton Jones (1972) and Smith (1978) indicated that there was an important variable the child's choice about mobile play or, for instance, running one after another compared to the use of fixed objects. In Roper and Hinde's opinion, actually, it is necessary also to consider the constancy of individual differences in children's social behaviour even in situations of play where the available objects are very different. Moreover, the definition of social participation as a continuum from solitary play to parallel and then to social play implies an idea of social development through these styles of play.

Roper and Hinde's thesis, instead, says that solitary play, even in primary school, can indicate independence and maturity: therefore the nature of different children's social behaviours must be specified. They carried out a study in a primary school on 67 children (the age ranged between 38 and 58 months old) and they found strong stability in interactive and social children's behaviour, either within the same period of video-recording (January-March) or between the first and the second period of video-recording (January-March versus April-July). Moreover there was a coherent link between behaviours inside the class and in the
playground. These two environments are different either because of the teacher’s control, or because of different kind of available activities. Children’s modality of interaction and communication was found constant in both situations; as Blurton Jones (1972) and Smith (1978) also found. These authors discovered a positive correlation between communication and group play as well as mobile play. They also found that the dimension of solitary play is independent from that of parallel or social play. This means that there is no correlation between how much a child plays alone and how much he/she plays with others. So, the dimension of social participation should not be considered as a linear dimension, but it should be described at least through two dimensions: the solitary one and that of parallel and social play. To play alone does not necessarily mean a lack of social abilities, but it could be an index of personal autonomy, in the sense that some children play well both alone and with others.

Concerning this, Bonica and Kielland (1983) noticed that at least three aspects of child's autonomy could be recognized:

i) autonomy meant as emotional well-being, strongly linked to trust experienced during the primary relation (A. Freud, 1965; Winnicott, 1958). In this perspective, behavioural indexes such as asking for help, capacity to play alone although in another’s presence, capacity to wait and to tackle frustrations, are intended as indexes of autonomy.

ii) autonomy meant as maturity in the cognitive and social field, through reaching competence that enables the child to represent the world, to intervene on it, to understand and to live another’s situation.

iii) ethological studies, finally, allowed to mark a conception of autonomy as initiative and independence, based on species-specific behaviours. Thus, an index of independence is both the capacity of regulate the behaviours of separation from adults to explore, and behaviours of approach to a "safe basis" and curiosity concerning new things.
It was felt important to clear up contradictory aspects of the concept of "solitary play" to distinguish between those activities that witness a child's real trend to run away from social contacts (and so, be able to predict possible future psychic discomforts) and those that, by contrast, are an index of an adequate social and cognitive development.

From this perspective Rubin (1982) tried to identify the qualitative instead of quantitative aspects of child's play to define a child's lack of social maturity. For example, solitary functional play (a child who plays alone repeating the same gestures and actions) is negatively correlated to aspects of social competence, instead of solitary constructive play.

By contrast parallel constructive play seems to be correlated to social competence, because children who do it are usually popular in the classroom, they have positive interactions with peers and they have often a quite high frequency of conversations with others. However functional solitary play is especially done by isolated children, and this seems to confirm that children who do not have friends in the classroom and are isolated from and rejected by others have less social ability, and so they lack several social strategies necessary to get into interactions with peers.

In this context, we should consider rough-and-tumble play, very present in bullies' behaviour during playtime. Rough-and-tumble can be distinguished from fighting which is characterized by struggle, kicks, bites, and other typical aggressive behaviours, because it presents, at the same time, a positive facial expression with laughter in all the participants.

Boulton and Smith (1989), define rough-and-tumble as a friendly and playful activity that does not usually involve any intent to hurt, at least up to early adolescence. Its function remains unclear, but it appears to be part of normal development and children who rough-and-tumble a lot are generally sociable but not especially aggressive (Boulton & Smith, 1989; Smith & Boulton, 1989). These authors observe that rough-and-tumble may exercise social skills, but as a form of
behaviour it can also be used in socially manipulative ways, for example to inflict harm or achieve dominance.

Smith, Hunter, Carvalho and Costabile (1992) examined this form of play by looking at the views and beliefs held by children, in addition to perspectives from adult observers. A questionnaire was given to children 8 to 11 years old, in English and Southern Italian schools, in order to obtain basic information on how children viewed playfighting and playchasing. Findings were generally similar for English and Italian children. Generally children (both males and females) like playchasing, and they are reported to be very often involved in it and as enjoying it. By contrast, many children reported that playfighting could lead to serious fighting and that it could improve one's strength or fighting skill and could be used to display strength or dominance to others.

Pellegrini (1989) reports that rough-and-tumble is qualitatively different for children who are socially popular or rejected: in fact, he found that it can be a form of socially affiliate play for popular children, but an aggressive relationship for rejected children. In another study Pellegrini (1994), examining popular, average and rejected adolescents, found that when considering two forms of rough-and-tumble (chase and rough play), rejected and average children were more often involved in rough play than popular children, and that this is related to aggression and dominance status.

1.5. Aggression
Another very important aspect of peer interactions in children is aggressive behaviour. This topic is particularly important to the present study because it is fundamental to the better understanding of many aspects common to bullying, such as differences between overtly and relationally aggressive children, gender differences and age differences.

The studies about this subject have used different methodologies, such as self-reports, peer reports, adult reports and naturalistic observation. Mostly these

A great deal of research has been conducted on aggression in the past decade (e.g., Dodge & Crick, 1990; Parke and Slaby, 1983). Although significant advances have been made in our understanding of childhood aggression, one limitation of this research has been that the forms of aggression assessed in past research are more salient for boys than for girls, such as direct and physical aggression. As a consequence, firstly, as a group, boys were considered as exhibiting significantly higher levels of aggression than girls (Block, 1983; Parke & Slaby, 1983), and secondly, a whole typology of aggressive strategies (more typical of female style) were not explored at all.

Based on this awareness, recent studies have identified an indirect form of aggression (called by Crick “relationally oriented”) that has been shown to be more characteristic of girls than the overt forms of aggression (or direct) studied in the past (Bjorkqvist & Niemela, 1992; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). From these studies, it seems that females tend to use forms of indirect aggression such as telling tales, spreading rumours, persuading others not to play with the person, or direct verbal aggressive strategies (e.g. name-calling, threatening) compared to males, who, by contrast, tend to use direct physical aggression (e.g. hitting, pushing, kicking) (Feshbach, 1969; Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist and Peltonen, 1988).

Bjorkqvist and Niemela (1992) suggested that the fact that child subjects have often been observed in school yards or in day-care centres (Maccoby & Jacklin 1974; Hyde, 1984), inevitably favors physical (typically "male") aggression, since indirect aggression (more typical of females) or any means intended to cause psychological harm, are very difficult to observe. Bjorkqvist and Niemela think that this observational one-sideness may explain Hyde's (1984) finding that sex differences are greater in naturalistic than in experimental studies. Hyde concludes that only 5% of the variation of frequency in aggression scores is explained by sex differences, with 95% explained by within-gender variation or by chance. Hyde
finds gender differences in general to be smaller in more recent studies than in previous ones, and suggests three possible explanations for this:

1. Null findings may have become more likely to be published;
2. Experimenters and observers may have changed their perception of what aggression is;
3. Socialization in practices and cultural norms may have changed.

The gender difference in aggression is also related to age: girls are estimated by their peers to use indirect means of aggression significantly more than boys in all age groups except for the youngest (8 years olds: at that age, it appears indirect means of aggression are not yet fully developed) (Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, & Peltonen, 1988; Lagerspetz & Bjorkqvist, 1992).

Other studies, conducted by Crick et al. (1995), explored the different strategies of aggressive behaviour, hypothesizing that girls’ attempts to harm others would focus on relational issues and would include behaviours that are intended to significantly damage another child’s friendships or feelings of inclusion by the peer group. Thus, Crick and Grotpeter (1995), expected that girls would be most likely to harm peers through relational aggression, whereas boys would be most likely to harm peers through overt aggression. In contrast to overt aggression, which harms others through physical damage or threat of such damage (e.g., pushing, hitting, kicking, or threatening to beat up a peer), relational aggression harms others through damage to their peer relationships or the threat of such damage (e.g., angrily retaliating against a peer excluding her from one's play group; threatening to withdraw friendship or acceptance as a way of hurting or exerting control over a peer). Relational aggression is significantly related to concurrent social-psychological adjustment difficulties such as peer rejection, depression, and negative self-perceptions for both boys and girls (Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1994; Grotpeter & Crick, 1994; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Moreover, longitudinal studies indicate that relational aggression is predictive of future social maladjustment (i.e. peer rejection) for both sexes, and is predictive of negative
changes in social maladjustment (i.e. becoming more rejected over time) for girls. These results indicate that engagement in relationally aggressive acts may place children at risk for developmental difficulties. So it is important to identify factors that may promote children's use of these behaviours.

Research based on social information-processing theory has shown that overtly aggressive children perceive, interpret and make decisions about social stimuli in ways that increase the likelihood of their engaging in aggressive acts. Through the use of experimental and intervention designs, it has also been demonstrated that these social information-processing mechanisms play an important causal role in the generation of children's aggressive behaviour. In particular, it has been demonstrated that biased social information-processing patterns temporally precede the development of aggressive behaviours problems, and that changing or manipulating aggressive children's processing in adaptive ways leads to significant reductions in their subsequent use of aggression (Bierman, 1986; Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1990; Guerra & Slaby, 1990; Rabine & Coie, 1989).

One of the most widely studied components of social information processing, particularly for aggressive children, involves children's attributions about peer's intent in a social situation (Crick & Dodge, 1994). This social cognitive task involves interpreting social cues and using those cues to infer motives to others (e.g. determining whether peers are acting with benign or hostile intent). Studies of individual differences in children's attempts to interpret social stimuli have established that overtly aggressive children exhibit hostile attributional biases in response to ambiguous provocation situations. That is, overtly aggressive children attribute malicious intent to peer provocateurs more often than do other children, even when such intent is not meant by peers (Dodge, 1980; Dodge & Frame, 1982; Guerra & Slaby, 1989; Sancilio, Plumert & Hartup, 1989).

Crick (1995) carried out a study where the first objective was to assess the social information-processing patterns of relationally aggressive children and the second objective was to assess children's feelings of distress for instrumental and
relational provocation situation. The consideration was that, according to social information-processing models, emotions are an integral part of children's processing of social cues. In this study, it was hypothesized that relationally aggressive children would feel more distressed than their peers by provocation of a relational nature, but would not differ from peers in their feelings about instrumental provocation.

Crick used a hypothetical-situation instrument to assess intent attributions. This instrument consists of 10 stories each of which describes a provocation situation in which the intent of the provocateur is ambiguous. Children answered two questions for each story, each of which assessed their attributions of the provocateur's intent. Children's feelings of distress were assessed by asking them to rate how upset and also how angry they would be if the "things in the story really happened to you" for each situation presented in the intent attribution measures. Children, through peer nominations, had been previously divided into non-aggressive, relationally aggressive and relationally plus overtly aggressive children.

Findings indicated that relationally aggressive children exhibited a social information-processing pattern similar to the one that has been established in past research for overtly aggressive children.

However, relationally aggressive children exhibited a hostile attributional bias for instrumental, provocation situations. These findings provide additional evidence for the validity of the distinction between relational and overt forms of aggression. They further indicate that the lack of demonstrated links found in past research between aggression and social information processing for girls (Crick & Dodge, 1994) may be caused by at least two factors: a) inattention to forms of aggression that are prevalent among girls and b) the failure to assess social information processing for contexts that are salient and problematic for aggressive girls.

Results of this research also indicate that emotional factors may play a role in the enactment of relationally aggressive behaviours. That is, the relatively high levels of distress felt by relationally aggressive children in relational conflict
situations may contribute to the social information-processing and behavioural difficulties of these children. For example, feeling upset when confronted with a relational provocation may increase the likelihood that children will interpret a peer's intent as hostile. Or, relationally aggressive behaviours may be used by some children to help them cope with their feelings of distress in these situations. This study, finally, provides support for the hypothesis that girls find relationship conflicts to be more upsetting than do boys. Crick argues that these findings may shed light on the gender differences which were obtained in relational aggression.

Other studies have focused on the origins of aggressive behaviour in preschool children, and the development of this social aspect over different ages (Bertacchini & Genta, 1974). The results show that in children from 3 to 6 years old the indexes for determining the social status of dominance and submission through aggressive behaviours rarely concern space (which is the typical index in animals), but that there are other aggressive indexes such as the dispute over objects, physical attacks and threats. Maybe for this reason, in their aggressive strategies, small children have to resort to physical means of aggression.

When verbal skills develop, they facilitate rich possibilities for the expression of aggression without having to resort to physical force. Thus, we can observe that between 6 and 7 years of age and between 8 and 9 years there is an increment of aggressiveness - both for males and females - with much clearer behavioural signals of social status, such as the defence of space, agonistical behaviour and play. Moreover, at this age the qualitative differences between males and females are much more marked compared to younger children. Indirect means of aggression are expected to coexist with direct verbal means of aggression during later adolescence and adulthood. Direct verbal means of aggression are more suitable in certain situations, especially as an expression of anger, or whenever direct strategies are called for. Indirect strategies fit better in other situations, especially when it is considered important not to be identified.
Recent studies focus on a typical aspect of aggressive behaviour in peer group whereby bullying is defined as being where a more dominant individual (the bully) exhibits aggressive behaviour intended to cause distress to a less dominant individual (the victim) (Smith & Thompson, 1991). The present study discusses this aspect with the understanding that bullying is a social interaction present in any structured groups such as school classes.

2. Bullying

2.1. Bullying in schools

The first studies about this subject were in Scandinavia (Heinemann, 1972; Olweus, 1978) and these were then extended to England (Smith, 1991), but there are now many countries involved in this research (for example Italy, Spain, Portugal, Japan, Australia, Canada). Bullying is defined by several criteria, such as that it is a form of aggressive behaviour which happens very often and repeatedly, by one person or more to another, and that there usually is a difference of strength (physical or psychological) between the bully and the victim. "Bullying" others can be characterized by physical attacks, but also by verbal aggressions or threats, rejection by groups of peers, larcenies and so on, and by indirect aggression. (Olweus, 1991).

Moreover, bullying is considered a social phenomenon (Craig & Pepler, 1996; Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Kaukiainen, 1996), and not only a dyadic problem, or concerning a relationship between the persons who are actively involved. This is important both to better understand the nature of a bullying action and to design interventions in schools. Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, Berts and King (1982) have pointed out two important features of bullying among school children: 1) its collective character, and 2) the fact that is based on social relationships in the group. They suggest that aggression in a group can be studied by examining the
relationship between people taking different roles, or having roles assigned to them.

Rigby and Slee (1993) suggest that among school children there are three dimensions of interpersonal relations which reflect tendencies, first, to bully others, second, to be victimized by others, and third to relate to others in a prosocial and cooperative manner. Their results support the factorial independence of these dimensions. However, in a bullying situation, prosocial/cooperative behaviour, as Salmivalli and her colleagues (1996) suggest, could imply many things, "e.g., taking sides with the victim, staying uninvolved and not engaging in active bullying behaviour, or perhaps even cooperating with the bully". In particular, these researchers define different "participant roles" assigned to the subjects, besides Bully and Victim, such as Reinforcer of the bully, Assistant of the bully, Defender of the victim and Outsider. Significant sex differences in the distribution of these Roles were found. Boys were more frequently in the roles of Bully, Reinforcer and Assistant, while the most frequent roles of the girls were those of Defender and Outsider (Salmivalli et al., 1996).

Olweus also emphasizes that there are students who participate in bullying but who do not usually take part the initiative. These may be labeled "passive bullies", "followers" or "henchmen" (Olweus, 1994).

Menesini, Elsea, Smith, Genta, Giammetti, Fonzi, and Costabile (1997) studied school children's attitudes to bullying. The pupils were asked what they usually did when they saw someone being bullied, and whether they might join in the bullying. About half of the junior/middle school pupils reported that they would try to help the victim, whereas only a third of the secondary school pupils felt this would be likely. Of those pupils who reported their likelihood of doing nothing, some felt they ought to help the victim, while some thought it was none of their business. The majority of the pupils did not think they would join in the bullying; only about one-fifth reported that they might do so. Attitudes, however, do not necessarily correlate with the actual behaviour of the children in bullying situations. Some very
interesting and useful contribution were studies where naturalistic video-recordings of peer interactions during playground activity were carried out (Boulton & Smith, 1993; Boulton, 1995; Pepler & Craig 1995; Craig, 1993). In these studies the behaviour of bullies and victims, but also of bystanders (teachers and peers) was described. Concerning bystanders' behaviour, Pepler and Craig (1995) found that peers were involved in some capacity in 85% of the episodes, with active participation, observing the interaction, being involved in activity with the bully or victim, and intervening in the interaction. They intervened in 12% of the bullying episodes. The majority of peers who intervened were male. School staff intervened in 4% of the observed bullying episodes.

The fact that usually bystanders do not intervene in bullying episodes to help victims, can also be due to the fact that often victims have no friends in the classroom. In fact, other studies (Hodges & Perry, 1997), found that victims are usually rejected in the peer group, and are without mutual friends; their possible mutual friends are usually rejected and victims too.

This means that the victim child feels more and more isolated, and for him/her it is very difficult to talk to someone else about their own problems. There is almost a silent acceptance inside the group of peers, so they don't find the strength to confide in other classmates. Otherwise, as victims and their classmates are so distant, even those bystanders who would be motivated and available to help them, prefer to not intervene - just because they are probably not aware enough about victims' suffering. This lack of empathy, due often to a simple lack of communication, also contributes to perpetuate the phenomenon.

Finally, for victims it is also difficult to talk to teachers about themselves, because they fear reprisal, or because often adults do not really take these kinds of problems seriously.

2.2. Bully and victim children
We know that generally bullies and victims have typical characteristics: bullying children are usually very aggressive to peers and to adults, they lack empathy to victims, they have average or even quite high self-esteem and tend to have externalizing behavioural problems (e.g., aggression) (Olweus, 1978; 1991; 1994; Bjorkqvist et al., 1982; Lagerspetz et al., 1982; Pulkkinen and Tremblay, 1992). They also have social perceptions that support their aggressive behaviors (Perry, Kusel, Perry, 1988).

In studies where sociometric status (Coie et al., 1982) was compared to being a bully or victim, bullying children are often seen by peers as controversial or rejected, but very often they have one or two follower friends (Boulton & Smith, 1993; Smith, Cowie and Berdondini, 1994; Cairns, Cairns, Neckerman, Gest, and Gariépy, 1988).

However, the female bullies constituted an exceptional group, whose popularity may be surprisingly high (measured by questions like "whom would you like to sit next to you in the classroom?" or "whom would be the leader in the class, if teacher were absent?"). Even if some characteristics typical of leaders were linked to male bullies as well, they were not accepted leaders. In the study by Salmivalli et al. (1996) it was stated, for example, that, while male bullies have a low sociometric status (even if not so low as victims have), female bullies scored above the mean in both social acceptance and social rejection. Salmivalli et al. (1996) suggest that maybe female bullies are socially and verbally smart children who can choose their words and amuse the others by verbally - directly or indirectly - attacking their victims. According to the descriptions given by their peers (Salmivalli, 1992), the girls in the "gang of bullies" also rate high in terms of the current youth culture; they are "tough girls" who know the newest fashion and the latest idols. It is possible that they are, even if frightening, also admired.

From other studies, moreover, we know that victim children are often physically weak or with physical abnormalities (Hodges et al. 1995b; Olweus, 1978; Stephenson & Smith, 1989), and this could be very interestingly connected
to the literature about clumsy and hyperactive children conducted by Kalverboer (1990). Hyperactive children are described as showing more socially negative behaviour towards peers than controls, such as being easily irritated, more aggressive, more often interfering with other children's activities, and at the same time having a very low sociometric status in the class group. By contrast, children who are clumsy reported having fewer playmates and less often asked to play with other peers, compared to control children. Like hyperactive children they are very often rejected by peers.

Victims are also submissive (Schwartz, Dodge, & Coie, 1993), they are described as tending to reward their attackers by relinquishing resources and by displaying signs of pain and suffering (Patterson, Littman & Bricker, 1967; Perry, Williard, & Perry, 1990; Olweus, 1994). Moreover, other researchers state that they are not able to use efficient social tactics and they lack humor (Hodges et al., 1995; Pierce, 1990; Perry et al., 1988).

The unpopularity of victims can be seen both as a cause and a result of continuous bullying. One reason for their being picked on and harassed in the first place may be their original unpopularity within the group. On the other hand, as Olweus (1991; 1994) pointed out when describing the group mechanisms involved in bullying, there are gradual cognitive changes in the perceptions of the victim by their peers. As the bullying continues they start to see the victim as deviant, worthless, and almost deserving of being harassed; along with these cognitive changes, the victim becomes even more unpopular. It becomes a social norm of the group not to like him/her. Generally, in the classroom, teachers are not used to involving children in group discussions about the problem of bullying which would present each child with the possibility of expressing their own feelings and of listening to the others' emotions. This fact, in my opinion, contributes to root bystanders' attitudes and their perceptions of victims.

Moreover, a distinction within the group of victims has been made by several authors (Olweus, 1978; 1994; Hodges & Perry, 1997). Some victimized children,
in fact, are passive and withdrawn and virtually never attack other children, whereas other victimized children are socially active, disruptive, and sometimes even highly aggressive. Olweus (1978) labeled children who are high on both aggression and victimization as "provocative victims" (also called "bully/victims", by Bower, Smith and Binney, 1992) and labeled children who are victimized but not aggressive as "passive victims". The definition of "provocative victims", seems to imply that these children provoke, in some way, their attackers. In fact, there are also children, with a high score both in aggression and victimization, who bully certain peers and are victims with others. For this reason, Hodges and Perry (1997), prefer to define these two categories of "victim" children as "aggressive victims" and "non aggressive victims".

A distinction concerning victim children and focused on their reactions to harassment has been made by Salmivalli, Karhunen and Lagerspetz (1996). They used both peer- and self-evaluations as methods of study. One issue was: what behaviour on the part of the victims is likely to a) make the others start or continue bullying or b) diminish bullying or put an end to it. Three different subtypes of victims were identified, through peer evaluation (the victims' self-evaluations of their behaviour supported these views): the Counteraggressive, the Helpless and the Nonchalant. Helpless and nonchalance were found to be typical responses of the girl victims, while boy victims tended to react to bullying with counteraggression or nonchalance. Helplessness and counteraggression in the case of girl victims and counteraggression in the case of boy victims were perceived as making the bullying start or continue. The absence of helplessness in the case of girl victims, and nonchalance as well as the absence of counteraggression in the case of boy victims were perceived as making bullying diminish or stop (Salmivalli, Karhunen, Lagerspetz, 1996).

Olweus (1991) states, moreover, that children belonging to disintegrated families or who are bullied by parents are likely to bully in school. Studies carried out in England and in Italy, about the childrens' perception of their families, found
that generally bullies represent their family as a group with very low cohesion, or even that they have divorced parents, where they often don't live with their natural father at home (Bowers, Smith & Binney, 1992; Berdondini & Smith, 1996; Genta, Berdondini, & Brighi, 1997). In the same studies, by contrast, it was found that victims have generally a perception of their family as a very united group.

We have seen that there is a sort of definition of the 'typical' bully and of some subgroups of victim children. I think that, through different methodologies, it would be possible to define further subtypes of bullies and victims which are even more specific than the work which has been done with the broader terms of "aggressive victims" and "non aggressive victims" or to better explore the definitions of different victims' reaction to bullying attacks made by Salmivalli and her colleagues (1996), in particular the "nonchalance" behaviour. For instance, maybe it is possible to distinguish between chronic bullies and victims and those children whose behaviours (aggressive or submissive) are more situationally determined, or to discover that other reactions of victims (besides counteraggressive, nonchalance and helplessness) exist.

2.3. Methodologies for studying bullying.

The most frequently used method to study the incidence of bullying is the anonymous questionnaire by Olweus which is now translated in different languages and used by most of the countries involved in this research. In this questionnaire there are many questions about "being bullied" (the frequency, the modality of the episodes, the number, the gender and the age of children who usually bully), and some about "bullying others", but also questions concerning the child's attitude to episodes of violence, the teachers or parents' behaviour and attitude in these cases of bullying, and so on.

Usually the results of the questionnaire in different countries confirm the high presence of the phenomenon of bullying, mostly in the elementary schools. There are also some differences that maybe can be attributed to the social and cultural
background. In Italy, for example, the phenomenon in elementary schools is reported by children who are being bullied at a very high level (46.4% in Italy, 27% in England, 9% in Norway) (Genta, Menesini, Fonzi, Costabile & Smith, 1996). So, it seems very important and urgent to know more about the dynamics of this phenomenon in Italy and to understand the characteristics of children involved in bullying.

A national research exercise on bullying was recently carried out in Italy, in which the anonymous questionnaire was used in almost every region of the country (Fonzi, 1997). A total average of the results about the reported bullying episodes in each part of the country (41% in primary schools) almost confirms the previous results which only concerned Tuscany and Calabria (46.4%). However, some parts of Italy seem to be hit more, such as Napoli and Palermo, while Piemonte, Valle d'Aosta and Calabria present a lower level. This was a mostly quantitative study, which has been included just to have a general Italian diagnosis about the phenomenon, but Italian researchers are now carrying out more qualitative studies throughout the whole country to offer a deeper reading of the problem in Italy (Fonzi, 1997).

In general, the vast majority of studies on bullying and victimization employ questionnaire or interview methodologies. These methods provide assessments of the prevalence of bullying problems, characteristics of the bully and/or victim, characteristics of bullying episodes and peers attitudes. But these methods are limited, because they cannot identify the complex, multi-level processes underlying bully/victim interactions and they omit much qualitative information.

It has been more and more confirmed, in these studies, that bullying is a social phenomenon that must be considered within an ecological framework of interactional influence, such as the peer group and the school social system. For this reason, other methodologies are, in my opinion, more suitable to observe the phenomenon than self reports or individual interviews, such as naturalistic observation, group interviews, and/or an integration of different methodologies,
qualitative as well as quantitative. A potentially strong alternative methodology, in my opinion, is the video-recording of children's behaviour. Studies on naturalistic observations of bullying are usually based on video-recordings in the playground (Boulton & Smith, 1993; Pepler & Craig, 1995) and in the classroom (Atlas & Pepler, 1998) in order to study the differences among bullies, victims and bystanders and their different responsibilities and responses during bullying episodes. Video-recording could also be adopted in various other frameworks (such as cooperative group activities in the classroom, or interviews). This might be used for different aims (for example to observe changes before and after an intervention and not only to record differences among bullies, victims and other children) and by using different coding systems in order, for example, to analyse individuals' behaviours and facial expressions, or group dynamics. I think that this methodology offers a deep variety of qualitative information that can be integrated to those provided by other methods. That is why I used it (together with other methodologies) in my own study, trying to exploit it as much as possible by using it in different frameworks and using different coding systems, depending on my aims.

2.4. Types of Bullying.

The typical characteristics of aggressive behaviour in children, such as gender differences, age differences, and so on, can be readily applied to bullying behaviours in children, with bullying being regarded as a subset of aggressive behaviour where there is an imbalance of power and where the aggressive act is repeated over time (Rivers & Smith, 1994). Recent surveys of bullying in British schoolchildren have found that boys were more likely to experience physical forms of bullying; girls were only slightly more likely to experience verbal forms of bullying, but (at secondary school, not at primary school) were much more likely to experience indirect bullying. In a study by Whitney and Smith (1993) the greater experience of indirect bullying by girls was found for both primary and secondary pupils. These studies also reported age changes in terms of differences between
primary and secondary pupils; the frequency of reported bullying decreases with age, but expressed as a percentage of all bullying reported, both studies found a decrease in physical bullying with age, but an increase in verbal bullying. Age changes in indirect bullying were found to be small and less consistent.

In a study about the types of bullying, Rivers and Smith (1994) found (like Bjorkqvist et al., 1988) that the largest decrease among secondary school pupils (particularly among girls) was in the number of experiences of direct bullying; however, there was also a substantial age-related decrease in experiences of indirect bullying. Rivers and Smith commented that boys tend to have larger and more diffuse social networks than girls, who prefer smaller, more intimate, and intense friendships (Lever, 1978). Thus indirect bullying might be less effective for boys as girls can perhaps hurt someone more effectively by social isolation and by rumor mongering.

An Italian study (Genta, et al. 1996) found some qualitative differences between Italian and English samples in the types of bullying identified. In fact, in both samples the percentage of direct verbal bullying (such as "call nasty names") is the highest, but in the Italian sample there are also high percentages for physical attacks, and for indirect attacks as compared to English data. The only type of bullying which is lower in Italy than in England is that concerned with calling nasty names related to race. This is perhaps because of the different social Italian reality, where the presence of different ethnic groups is still very small.

Finally, another interesting result found by Rivers and Smith (1994), was that a single boy bullying a child was most likely to use direct physical bullying. Indirect bullying was most likely when one or more girls, or (especially) both girls and boys were involved in the bullying.

As Rivers and Smith conclude, bullying

"can take many forms, not all equally obvious to adults. The popular misconception that bullying mainly involves physical aggression can be laid to rest. Bullying can be both subtle and elusive. It can be just as effective in the form of a note passed around the classroom as it can in
the playground where victims are taunted and hit. It can also take the form of silence and social isolation and this form of abuse is particularly difficult to prove as no one has called or been called a name, or been hit or threatened. These indirect forms of bullying are not infrequent."

That is why it is very important to further assess all these types of bullying and examine the different typologies of children involved in this form of aggression, in order to better understand the phenomenon, and also to create a really effective intervention in schools against it.
Chapter 2.

EMOTION and BULLYING

Introduction.
In the present chapter I address the issue of bullying from a particular point of view, that of research into the emotions.

Bullying, as relational process, can also be read and observed, in my opinion, by studying the expression of emotions in its leading characters, bullies, victims and bystanders. I suppose that these three categories of children have different ways to enact social relationships and thus, experience different emotions during interactions with peers. Studying their expressions of emotions can help us to understand and to gain more information about those emotions and so, often additional insight about them. The perspective of a study focused on the connection between bullying and emotion, moreover, seems to me particularly useful to also explore the field of interventions that are usually applied in schools and to measure their effect on children.

In order to study emotion in bullying, a clear methodology must be found and this is possible only if it is clear how emotions are defined, as well as their function in social relationships (particularly in peer relationships) and also to define which might be emotional disorders connected to bullying.

I present an overview of theories on emotions, choosing from this wide and often controversial field, those theoretical approaches that are in my opinion, particularly interesting and which form the basis of my hypothesis. Then, I briefly discuss the typical instruments used in psychological research to measure emotions. I also tackle emotional disorders and in particular disorders connected to fear and anger. These latter are certainly two emotions strongly connected to bullying. I explore the techniques that are usually applied to control them in order to introduce in the next
chapter, the theoretical and practical background necessary to create strategies of anti-bullying intervention.

Finally, I present an overview of studies on bullying in which some connections to the sphere of emotions have already been made, in order to clarify what is known about this and to consolidate my own ideas.

1) Theories on emotions as a "social" process.
Even though many psychological studies on this topic have been carried out over the last years (Arnold, 1960; Izard & Beuechler, 1979; Plutchik, 1980a), it is still very difficult to find a general definition of emotion and there is no agreement about exactly what it might be.

Broadly emotion can be defined as a complex system of interactions among subjective and objective factors and mediated by neural/hormonal systems which can a) originate affective experiences as sensation of pleasure/unpleasure; b) generate cognitive processes as perceptive effects, evaluations, label processes; c) make active physiological adjustments; d) produce a behaviour which is often, but not always, expressive, aimed and adaptive (Plutchik, 1994). This is a definition that, as the prevalent conception of emotions in psychology, assumes that they are essentially internal and personal reactions. Actually, since the last century there are also very different theoretical currents about the definition of emotion which are more focused on the link between emotions and relationships and consequently, on the function of expressions of emotions.

Darwin (1872) was the source of the evolutionary tradition in the study of emotion and argued that the process of evolution applies not only to anatomical structures but to intellectual and expressive behaviours as well. Emotional expressions, he believed, have a functional significance in the lives of animals: they act as signals and prepare the organism for action and they also communicate to others what action
is about to be taken, thereby increasing the organism's chances of survival. Although Darwin believed that most emotional expressions are innate, he felt that once they have occurred they are subject to voluntary control and can be used as a means of communication through either conscious expression or inhibition of the emotional behaviour.

Wallon (1974) states that the duty of emotions is to join persons together through their reactions. Emotions, he also argues, are composed by attitudes and by visual and resonant effects that are stimuli for others. They have the power to mobilize similar, complementary or mutual reactions and they make relationships possible.

More recently, Nico Frijda (1986) states that emotions have a biological base and that in human beings are influenced by cognitive factors which are not present in animals. He suggests that the presence of emotions is associated with attempts of inhibition and control both in human beings and in animals and that emotions are different among themselves depending on the modality of activation and also on the type of attempts it actions and on the response of the ANS (the autonomic nervous system). Moreover, he believes that different emotions are primed by different stimuli configurations, depending on the person's interpretation. Finally, emotions are considered to be primed by events that are significant to the person's life. His theory is cognitive, but also evolutionary because, although learning has very important effects on the connection among stimuli, experience and emotional behaviour, in many cases there is an innate stimulus/response connection that is based on neural programs.

It is particularly interesting that his theories highlight the connection between emotions and expression:

"Emotions are to be considered primarily as impulses or intents for actions to solve the problem posed by the environment. Emotional experience is awareness of these impulses or intents, together with awareness of these impulses or intents, together with awareness of the problems posed, that is, the eliciting situation. Expressions, being part of the actions flowing from these impulses or intents, are thus intrinsically related to emotions." (Frijda, 1987).
He also argues that facial behaviours may suggest emotional meanings to observers, but that may not be their function or purpose. In particular, he remarks that emotions may be accompanied by no facial expression at all, or not by characteristic ones (Fridlund, 1994; Frijda, 1986; Izard, 1977). This applies even to very strong emotions and not only because of self-control. He mentions, for instance, the expression researcher Dumas (1933a) who reproduced photographs of victims of the Chinese torture called "fragmentation into a thou sand and fragments". Victims' faces were bland, or showed merely gasping. Moreover, he states that expressions tend to be common to several states, emotional as well as non emotional. He states:

"This fact is suggested by the range of emotion interpretations given to almost every expression in recognition experiments and by the range of conditions under which any given expression actually occurs" (Frijda & Tcherkassof, 1997).

Thus, he explains that the information contained in facial expressions is that which is common in raising appraisal expectations, evoking affect and behaviour expectations in interactions and empathic responses. It is, in addition, what is common to the various conditions under which a given expression arises and to the various emotional and non emotional states that may elicit a given expression. He writes:

"Facial expressions, we propose, 'express' the individual's state of relational action readiness or unreadiness. State of action readiness is the proper content of facial expressions and that which observers infer from them in the first place. Expressions 'express' it, in the sense that an action expresses its underlying intention. They implement or effectuate action readiness" (Frijda & Tcherkassof, 1997).

A different approach is Tomkins's one (1962, 1970). He states that eight primary emotions exist (that he calls affects). Positive affects are interest, surprise and joy.
Negative affects are distress, fear, shame, disgust and anger. These primary emotions are "innate structured answers" to specific types of stimulus and are mostly expressed through several different facial expressions. In this model, for each affect specific programs exist in sub-cortical areas of the brain, so the affective system is viewed as part of the genetic endowment of infants. The closest colleague of Tomkins is Izard (1977), who extended Tomkins's theory, with particular attention to the role of facial expressions in emotions. Izard proposes to consider affects primarily as facial answers. In Izard's opinion patterns of facial reactions that we consider emotional have a neurological base in sub-cortical programmes which are specific for each emotion. These programs are genetically determined. Following Tomkins, Izard finds several primary emotions, that, combined in different ways, form the others. These emotions are interest, joy, surprise, fear, anger, distress, shame, contempt and disgust (Izard, 1977). These emotions can be observed as discriminate sets of muscular and glandular responses, located in the face and distributed in the body, that generate sensory feedback to the organism. These emotions have adaptive value, since they are connected to action patterns important for survival. Thus, even if not deeply discussed, but also implied by this theory, there is the acceptance that emotion has a social function.

Trevarthen (1993b) gave a very innovative definition of emotion that he used to develop his studies on infants' social abilities: "Human emotions regulate a unique intersubjectivity that generates cooperative awareness and acquires cultural knowledge". He explains that human intersubjectivity manifests itself as an immediate sympathetic awareness of feelings and conscious, purposeful intelligence in others. It is transmitted by body movements (especially of face, voice, tract and hands) that are adapted to give instantaneous visual, auditory or tactile information about purposes, interests and emotions and symbolic ideas active in subjects' minds (Trevarthen, in press.).
Thus, emotions work at three levels, in three different environments:

1. to protect the vital integrity and 'milieu interne' of the subject's body;
2. to guide perception, action and learning by evaluating the objects and the situations in the physical (non-mental) outside world and
3. to promote and develop interaction with the behaviours and motives of other subjects in the 'social environment' (Trevarthen, 1993).

He argues:

"It is in the nature of human consciousness to experience being experienced, to be an actor who can act in relation to other conscious sources of agency, to be a source of emotions while accepting emotional qualities of vitality and feeling from other persons by instantaneous empathy". (Trevarthen, 1993b).

Following this current, Parkinson (1996) presents an approach which puts social considerations at centre stage by arguing that emotions may be profitably viewed as forms of communication in which evaluative representations are made to other people. He states, that:

"although emotional functioning always involves cognitive processing and physiological responses at some level and always has some impact on personal experience, the organizing principles of the syndrome depend ultimately on social considerations" (Parkinson, 1996).

Barrett and Campos (1987) define emotions

"not mere feelings, but rather they are processes of establishing, maintaining, or disrupting the relations between the person and the internal or external environment, when such relations are significant to the individual".

Their statement is that emotion is the way the event, the person and the person's appreciation of significance are interrelated. (Campos, Campos and Barrett, 1989).
Fogel and his colleagues (Fogel, Nowokah, Dedo, Messinger, Dickson, Matusov and Holt, 1992) propose a social process theory of emotion and its development in the social context. This work represents an extension to emotional development of a previous theoretical analysis of the development of communicative and expressive action in the social context from a dynamic systems perspective (Fogel & Thelen, 1987). They write:

"We suggest that emotions are neither states nor programs but self-organizing dynamic processes that are created with respect to the flow of the individual's activity in a context." (Fogel et al., 1992).

In this work they take the basic assumptions of a dynamic systems approach and pursue some of their logical consequences for explaining emotion and its development. Dynamic systems concepts related to the stability and instability of emotion is used to explain the variability of emotions and the sequences of emotions that occur in everyday situations. Finally, they propose that the acculturation of emotions is a socially-co-constructed process that arises out of each infant's detection of invariant in emotional gradients that are embedded in social routines.

I agree with the view that emotions have a social function and that they are the basis of personal relationships. That is why I argue that the study of bullying and of the possible interventions to tackle it, can be much improved by an approach that values and assesses bullies, victims and bystanders' emotional reactions and communications. It is possible, indeed, that each one of them has a very different way of emotionally experiencing peer relationships, that some of them have a particular emotional disorder and maybe difficulty in overtly expressing some emotions or of recognizing the others' expressions. In order to observe how an anti-bullying process works, it seems to me that the exploration of children's emotional reaction is a fundamental starting point.

The theories analysed above give an idea about how emotions are recently considered and defined inside the social relationships. But it is very important now to explore how emotions are studied and measured, in order to apply the most appropriate methodology for a study on emotions in bullying.

Measurement of emotion changes depending on the theory of emotion behind it.

However, an integration of techniques has been growing in recent years which is based on the integration of theories. Plutchik (1994) describes the following four methodologies to measure emotion:

a). Introspective Measures.

This methodology concerns the personal reports that persons complete about their own emotions. Different kinds of tests are used.

Firstly there are lists of adjectives concerning different emotions, but the problem in these cases is that it is very difficult to find an agreement about the way to define the emotions and how to unite emotions to build scales or dimensions. Another problem is how to verbally distinguish the transient (mood) and the enduring (emotions) emotional states. Maybe the most famous is the Adjective Check List, created by Gough (1960), but also are very important the Multiple Affect Adjective Check List by Zuckerman & Lubin (1965) and the Emotion Profile Index by Plutchik & Kellerman (1974) which was created to verify Plutchik's psycho/evolutionary theory (1962).

Another way to measure emotions is the self descriptive questionnaire which is a kind of test often used where the subject is asked to answer some questions about his/her fears, self esteem, mood and so on. An example of this scale is the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, by Spielberger, Gorsuch and Lushene (1970).

Methodologies concerning the verbal expressions of emotion are very controversial, because the processes subjected to a verbal communication of internal states are very different compared with those that regulate the non verbal expression
of emotion. One can say that one is "sad", but it must be considered that verbal information on emotions have some limitations. This is because either it's very often difficult to recognize and label correctly one's own feelings, or because in many cases expression of emotion requires an expressive immediateness that verbal communication does not allow (Ricci Bitti, 1990).

b). The meaning of behaviour.
The patterning of facial expressions has been regarded as a behavioural system that has a one-to-one correspondence with specific emotional states (Ekman et al., 1972; Ekman & Friesen, 1976; Izard, 1971, 1977; Tomkins, 1962). Individual differences, socialization processes and cultural display rules act in such a fashion as to mask the face, thus undermining the unique relationship between certain facial expressions and internal states. Perhaps the most likely time for the existence of a one-to-one correspondence between facial expressions and states is in the early period of life; however, cultural and individual differences are already apparent, even at the beginning of life making a one-to-one correspondence difficult to demonstrate (Caudill & Weinstein, 1969; Freedman, 1974).

The measurement of emotional behaviour requires the consideration of a variety of possible modalities. While studies of facial expressions are a part of the Darwinian tradition, Darwin (1872) himself described not only specific facial expressions related to different emotions, but postures and vocal behaviours as well.

Much of Darwin's work has been carried forward by animal ethologists, although there is a growing interest in the facial expressions of human beings and their measurement (Ekman et al., 1972; Izard, 1971, 1977; Tomkins, 1962, 1963). There is evidence that many facial expressions have the same meanings in most human societies (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1970; Ekman, 1972, 1973a) and may be found in blind children and children who are both blind and unable to speak (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1973; Thompson,
1941). These studies suggest that there is certain invariance in non verbal expressions that occur across the human species.

In the scales concerning emotional behaviour the intensity of an emotional response is studied, even if this aspect of behaviour has only been partially explored. Traditional measurement techniques often do not provide a way to measure intensity directly, rather, they assess intensity in terms of the frequency or the duration of a particular response. Intensity has also been assessed through physiological measures. More reactive heart-rate increases, for example, may be associated with greater emotional intensity.

Studies about the facial expressions have a long history, but recently attempts have been made to construct a systematic mapping of infants' and young children's faces (Demos, 1982; Izard, 1979; Oster, 1978; Oster & Ekman, 1978; Young & Décarie, 1977). similar to the ethograms developed for nonhuman primates (Chevalier-Skohnikoff, 1073), older children (Blurton-Jones, 1971) and adults (Ekman & Friesen, 1978; Grant, 1969).

Non verbal expressions involving parts of the body other than the face have been studied primarily in animals and in human adults. The use of bodily postures in adults to communicate internal states has received some attention in the non verbal communication literature (Argyle, 1975; Mehrabian, 1968; 1969; 1972; Scheflen, 1964, 1972). Approximately 1,000 different postures are anatomically possible, although each culture selects and uses only a limited repertoire (Hewes, 1955).

c). Measurements through the products of behaviour.

Another method in the measurement of emotion is based on the study of the effects or product of behaviour, more than on the observation of behaviour. Clinical psychologists use this kind of method to measure patients' emotions. The typical tests used are called projective tests, as in the Rorschach test, or the drawing of human
figures test. In these tests, depending on what the person interprets or draws, the clinical psychologist infers something concerning his/her emotions, expressed through his/her imaginative behaviour.

Another typical example of this method is the Family System Test (FAST) (Gehring & Wyler, 1986). In this test, created for clinical psychological use, the participant is asked to represent his/her family members on a plot, using wooden figures of adults (males and females) and of children (males and females), in particular showing "how close they feel to each other" and, using other little wood pieces to make the figures higher, to signify which members of the family are able to influence others and are more powerful. In this way, the test measures two very important variables within the family, Cohesion and Power, two indexes that can also help to infer the patient's emotional characteristics.

d). Physiological measures.

This approach tries to assess the modifications of ANS to measure emotions. Most of the research in this field, however, concerns generalized stress more than particular emotions and the results were not always coherent.

The focus on the ANS and sympathetic activity led to the use of the galvanic skin response (GSR) as a physiological measure of emotion or activation (Sternbach, 1966). Numerous studies were performed to determine whether participants would be "activated" by different sorts of tasks, including electrical shock (Seward & Seward, 1934), free association (Jones & Wechsler, 1928), pleasant and unpleasant odors (Shock & Coombs, 1937) and various laboratory conditions, including loud noises, burning oneself with a lighted match, eating candy and quizzes (Bayley, 1928; Patterson, 1930). In general, the "stronger" the stimulus, the shorter the latency and the more extreme the GSR (Strongman, 1978).
Other peripheral measures of ANS activity used to study emotion and activation include blood pressure, heart rate (HR) and respiration (Lacey et al. 1953; 1963).

Chapter 4 describes the different methodologies used in order to assess emotional expressions in bullies, victims and bystanders.

3. Emotional disorders.
Assuming that some children might have emotional disorders and considering that emotions are a relational process, it follows that this can obstruct and disrupt peer relationships. I will briefly discuss some typical emotional disorders and consider the usual strategies applied by psychologists and psychoanalysts to tackle them. This can be useful in understanding possible disorder among children that are involved in bullying episodes and also in considering the aims and the procedures of building an anti-bullying intervention.

Clinicians generally agree on the usefulness of a classification of mental or emotional illness.

Generally emotions are considered pathological in four conditions: when they are excessive and persistent; when they are absent or too limited; when strong emotions clash; when disconnections are present among elements of the emotional chain, such as cognitions, sensations, physiology and behaviour (Plutchik, 1995). Moreover, it is important to note that in clinicians’ opinion, there is not a clear borderline between normal and pathological emotional processes (Brenner, 1982) and that all the examples mentioned above reflect the psychopathology of daily life.

Usually the two emotions that are most frequently related to emotional disorders are fear (or anxiety) and anger.

3.1. Fear/anxiety.
Different theories of anxiety exist and these are:

a). Modern psychoanalytic theory considers anxiety as a signal that indicates a dangerous situation. The danger itself can result from conscious or unconscious threats of wound or loss, from prohibited desires and from painful emotions.

b). Biological theory is represented by Klein (1981), who observes that two types of anxiety exist: the first a sensation of panic that happens in unforeseeable moments; the second a sort of anticipatory anxiety, which consists of the fear of a possible panic attack. Klein states that panic attacks can result from disturbed experiences of separation during childhood.

c). The theory by Sheehan (1983), a psychiatrist, is based on the idea too that two types of anxiety exist, one exogenous and another endogenous. The first type is simply a reaction to a danger and is usually provoked by an accident or a situation. Endogenous anxiety seems to arise from inside the body and is what is generally called a panic attack. Sheehan tries to explain the different symptoms of anxiety as a pathology more than a natural progress of the emotionally disturbed. This implies a biological anomaly, where anxiety is a process of psychological conditioning and has a fundamental role in life in dealing with stress.

There are other theories about fear and the anxiety, based on the hypothesis that, as we live in social groups, organized and structured by hierarchical laws, social anxiety could be a developed method to maintain cohesion inside the group (Trower & Gilbert, 1989). In this theory the socially anxious person has a cognitive style through which he/she pays attention to threats and loss of status in a hostile and competitive world. One way to modify this pattern is learning to create a network of friendships. Another is trying to modify the perception of the world as dangerous. A third method can be to improve one's own capacities to negotiate inside hierarchy of dominance.
3.2 Anger.

Researchers consider anger as an internal sensation that persons do not necessarily express with evident behaviour; this is because very often thought of the consequences of violent impulses (that anger generates) inhibits the action.

Experimental studies of anger and of what provokes it, have found that usually the most typical antecedents to anger are relational problems, interaction with others, unfairness (Wallbott & Scherer, 1989), or situations that participants perceive as a threat to something that they consider belonging to them or to their group. Also, a loss of social status, dominance or authority generates anger (Blanchard & Blanchard, 1984).

However, it is evident that anger is connected with many aspects of daily life. When extreme, it can provoke problems to the same person and/or to society, depending on whom is turned to. Even suicide, in fact, is considered by psychoanalysts (according to many clinical observations) as a form of anger turned on to oneself (Motto, Heilbron & Juster, 1985; Burk, Kurz & Moller, 1985), while several studies have shown that very often violent behaviour can be an expression of anger turned to others (Johnson, 1972; Plutchik, Climent & Ervin, 1976).

Generally there are typical ways to control or stop the anger. One example is physical or psychological punishments. Actually, some studies indicate that punishments do not necessarily reduce the violent behaviour; for example, punitive parents, who give their punished child a violent model of behaviour, often have violent children. Another way to reduce the violence can be the use of time-out, so for example, when a child is violent with teachers or classmates, he or she is sent alone to a room for a short period of time.

Another approach (typical of clinical therapy) to reduce anger can be role-play, through which a person gives vent to his/her emotions in a simulated situation and
often the clinician helps the patient to see the problem from another point of view that can give him/her the possibility to find a non aggressive solution.

4. Emotions in bullying.

After this general overview on the field of emotions, the known connections between this field and that of bullying are presented here.

Literature on bullying describes behavioural characteristics of bully and victim children (see first chapter). Through these aspects of children's behaviour we can see that generally bullies and victims have very different emotional expressions and are particularly liable to externalizing and probably internalizing emotional disorders. Bullies generally externalize aggressive behaviour and they likely derive some sense of satisfaction and pleasure from their attacks on victims (Craig & Pepler, 1996). In particular, they tend to interpret ambiguous signals in hostile ways and they more easily choose aggressive behaviour to solve social conflicts (Steinberg & Dodge, 1983).

Some research carried out by Smith and McWhinney (cited in Smith, Boulton & Cowie, 1993) show that both bullies and victims tend to wrongly interpret "ambiguous" situations, such as rough and tumble episodes during the playtime, as bullying episodes. Particularly bullies, compared to control and victim children, describe the participants' feelings differently, because they tend to indicate the aggressor as happy and they have a lack of empathy for the victim's feelings; moreover they say that the victim child provoked the bully in some way. In general, these results seem to demonstrate that the two categories (bully and victim) of children, have difficulties in reading and interpreting the other's emotions.

Based on these studies, an Italian study examined the capacity for recognition of emotion in bullies, victims and bystanders, through the test created by Ekman and Friesen (1975), where pictures concerning six basic emotions (joy, sadness, fear,
anger, surprise and disgust) are shown to the participants. Children were asked to indicate the emotion corresponding to each picture. Results showed that bullies are less able than others to recognize emotions and that victims have more difficulties than others in recognizing anger (Fonzi, Ciucci, Berti, & Brighi, 1996).

Actually, even if there are not many studies focused on emotions in bully and victim children, it is likely that these two types of children might have some disturbance concerning the sphere of emotions.

This idea is confirmed by English and Italian studies where the FAST (Family System Test), by Gehring & Wyler (1986) was used in samples of bully, victim and bystander children to measure their family structure (Bowers, Smith, & Binney, 1992; Berdondini & Smith, 1996; Genta, Berdondini & Brighi, 1997). The results of these studies demonstrated that the perception of one's own family is different in each bully/victim category. In bullies the family is often represented as a disintegrated group, particularly the dyad father/mother relationship and very often the biological father is absent from home; while in victims the family is often represented as a very close and united group and without any separation of figures. Moreover, the results of the study in which two other figures out of the family were added to the FAST test (where one represents a drug addict and the other a neighbour), show that the victim children use a safe distance between the family and the figures of the other two persons usually even putting the drug addict in the farthest corner from the family. In the bullies' representation there is no difference (either in cohesion or power) among the family member figures and the two other persons and the disposition of the figures on the plot is generally scattered.

From this finding we can infer that victims seem to belong to united, close families and so may be in a situation where they do not are made ready to tackle the social reality outside the family situation, thus, their just feelings towards the outside world are of fear. By contrast, bullies often lack of a cohesive family unit and have a
confused and ambiguous family structure which often has a very competitive and argumentative relationship between the parents. This does not give them the necessary sense of a boundary between the different status of social hierarchy, between the inside and the outside. But at the same time this does not give them the capacity to create emotional and empathic contact with others which leaves them with a sort of indifference that can be transformed into anger when contact with the other becomes too close.

So, fear and anger could be two strong emotions connected to the sphere of emotions of bullies and victims. Otherwise, it is easy to speculate that victims have some emotional disturbance with fear and bullies with anger.

In fact, there are other studies about victims' emotion (also not strictly related to bullying) that produce completely different findings. For instance, studies concerning prolonged and repeated interpersonal violence or victimization (Herman, 1992; Shengold, 1989) suggest that a typical observed post traumatic symptom is altered consciousness. First person accounts of the survivors themselves, descriptive clinical literature and more rigorously designed clinical studies, are the methodologies mostly used to observe the victims after a prolonged trauma. It is suggested that "through the practice of dissociation, voluntary thought suppression, minimization and sometimes outright denial, they (the victims) learn to alter an unbearable reality." (Herman, 1992). Another symptom is being depressed and totally passive, without any initiative (Flannery, 1987; Walker, 1979; Niederl and, 1968).

These findings could be confirmed by a study focused on attachment relationships and on bullying (Myron-Wilson & Smith, 1997) that uses the Separation Anxiety Test (SAT - Klagsbrun & Bowlby, 1978) which is a projective test in which children are interviewed about nine photographs depicting a range of separation situations. Each participant is asked how the child in the picture would feel, why and what he/she would do. The scoring system used gives scores of nine dimensions,
emotional openness, dismissal and devaluing of attachment, self-blame, resistance or withdrawal, preoccupied anger, displacement of feelings, optimism/pessimism of outlook, coherence of mind and providing a solution to the situation. Victim children were found to be associated with low emotional openness and high dismissal of feelings and they particularly dismissed the value of attachment or tended to be restricted in their feelings and often minimized the value of relationships.

At this point my question is: do victims overtly express pain and fear or do they tend to be dissociated and dismissive? For example, are they unable to recognize and nominate their own emotions, or might they be denying or minimizing them? Do they in case have blank facial expressions? In other words, is the point their incapacity to recognize the others' emotions, or is it that they fail to overtly express their own? In my study, I have tried to answer this question.

Finally when considering bullying as a social phenomenon it is very important also to consider how bystanders feel when they watch a bullying attack. We saw in the previous chapter that there are different types of bystanders and we know that some of them would like to help the victim, but are too scared to intervene (Menesini et al. 1997; Pepler et al., 1996; Cowie et al., 1997). But there are also bystanders who feel indifferent towards the victims, or even enjoy seeing others suffering. Is it possible to change these perspectives in children who are usually called the "control" and thus supposed to be capable of cooperation, support, empathy towards their peers? Is there maybe a sort of emotional misunderstanding due to ambiguous victims' expression, so that bystanders do not really realize how serious the victims' suffering is? Do bystanders have the opportunity, in a normal school structure, to listen to the victims' emotions in order to become more empathic? Is there an effective way to make them aware that by not intervening they simply support the bullies' actions?

Some of the typical strategies used to tackle the phenomenon in the classrooms in England (Sharp & Smith, 1994; Smith et al. 1993) are based on role-play,
cooperative activities, exercises to develop assertiveness and so on; they are clearly drawn from therapeutic techniques that can help not only the class situation, but individual children with possible emotional disorders, in changing and improving their approach to themselves and to others. At the same time, one of the principal aims of these intervention programs is to awake the bystanders' awareness towards the phenomenon of bullying and to develop in them a stronger sense of responsibility and empathy.

My personal opinion is that in order to reach these goals, an anti-bullying intervention based only on cooperative group activities in the classroom is not enough. I think that we must give children a further and more overt possibility to develop responsibility and empathy towards the others. Usually in anti-bullying interventions a section is provided which is dedicated to the debriefing of the activities shared with others through group discussion (see next chapter). I think that it should be more specifically structured. Especially in the first sessions of cooperative group work, some children are not able to response properly to the social rules, so that some others are "bullied", excluded and ignored even during those anti-bullying strategies. How do they feel in those situations? Do they have an "official" possibility to talk about it? Do the others ever realize it? Is it a group discussion which simply verbally debriefs the activity enough to really understand what happened during that situation? Or, for instance, could the possibility of video-recalling those moments with proper questions be more effective?
Chapter 3.

ANTI-BULLYING INTERVENTIONS.

Introduction.
Here I overview the most important current studies in which strategies of anti-bullying intervention were used. There are clearly strong connections to the two previous chapters. Firstly, as the intervention activities were usually carried out in the classroom within the normal curriculum and knowledge of such aspects as peer culture, sociometric status and the typical characteristics of peer relationships is fundamental as a basis for creating an adequate series of strategies that children can use and appreciate. Secondly, the usual measures applied to study and observe the children's relationships with classmates (such as peer nominations for sociometric status and for bully/victim categories, natural observation during the playtime and questionnaires) are the same that researchers use to evaluate the effectiveness of the chosen anti-bullying strategies.

To create appropriate techniques of intervention moreover, the emotional climate can be a very important basis from which to transform group dynamics, to develop positive feelings to oneself and to others and to develop empathy for victims. Finally, emotional disorders must be considered to better understand which emotional problems might be present in children and so can be used to elaborate particular strategies of intervention focused on tackling them.

After the more general overview, I then discuss the issue of anti-bullying interventions in Italy and the role of school policy in this country. Finally, I present a more specific section on cooperative group work which is one of the most common strategies of intervention in this area, and on Interpersonal Process Recall, an interview concerning feelings and thoughts experienced during a past interaction. I
used both these methodologies as anti-bullying techniques in the Italian junior school where I carried out my study.


We saw in the first chapter that bullying is now a problem explored and studied in several countries. Each one of them is building and creating strategies of intervention that seem to be particularly effective for the specific cultural and social area in which they are applied.

So it is possible to distinguish several trends, both theoretical and practical, which characterize different strategies in different countries.

I would like to present the two most representative countries which have considered this problem and which gave a lead for other countries either about the strategies of intervention or the applied methodologies to assess their effectiveness. Then I explore what is being done in Italy.

1.1. Norway.

Following three pre-adolescent suicides which were apparently linked to extensive victimization, the Norwegian government made it mandatory that every classroom, in every school in the country, would have a program to combat bullying (Olweus, 1991). In Norway there was a coordinated, nationally based effort with the Ministry of Education financing both the development of the program and its evaluation. Norwegian schools were provided with a video and a package of written materials on the background and management of bullying. Roland (1993) notes that the Norwegian campaign had been founded on 10 years of effort during which research fuelled public and professional concern about bullying and which was translated into wide media coverage and support for the intervention.
Olweus (1987) describes the national intervention as designed to: increase awareness of and knowledge about the problem, including dispelling myths; actively involve teachers and parents in planning and implementation; develop clear rules against bullying behaviour; and provide support and protection for victims with an emphasis on eliminating their isolation within the peer group. In this description the awareness is clear concerning the need to tackle bullying in all the different spheres connected to the problem itself: the school staff, the classrooms, the individuals, the families. The Norwegian program in fact comprises of a new and original model to approach this problem because it covers all the different levels that together constitute the whole school system. That is why this model can be defined as a systemic approach, because to reduce bullying, researchers worked with participants at each of the school, parent, classroom/peer, and individual levels (Olweus, 1991; Roland, 1993). This method combines primary and secondary prevention: all children in a school participate in activities to increase their understanding and to provide them with skills to deal with bullying. Individual children who experience problems related to bullying and victimization are provided with additional guidance.

i). School level.
In the Norwegian intervention program, core components at the school level include a school conference day, improved break-time supervision and playground organization and equipment, regular staff meetings for continuing education, and monitoring of the program within the school. Olweus prepared a 32-page booklet for teachers to inform them of the problems of bullying and available strategies for addressing them (Olweus, 1994).

ii) Parent level.
In Norwegian schools, there are regular parent-teacher meetings to inform parents of the problem of bullying and of the signs associated with a child’s victimization. Parents and teachers work together to enhance the school climate, increase supervision during recess and lunch and promote school/home contact. In addition to meetings around the problem of bullying, resources are also available to support parent involvement.

A video depicting various bullying scenes, involving both boys and girls, was developed and shown to teachers, parents and children. The bullying episodes are graphic and deliver a cogent message about bullying and its consequences.

iii). Classroom level.
Within this program of intervention, there are several components directed at the classroom level. Class rules are established in collaboration with the children, such as that no bullying will be tolerated, that anyone witnessing bullying is responsible for intervening or getting assistance and that efforts will be made to include isolated children. Another important component at the class level is the promotion of regular class meetings to discuss the rules and any infractions, to develop fair sanctions and to encourage an awareness and concern for victims.

iii) Individual level.
Finally, the core Norwegian components at the individual level include serious talks with bullies and victims, as well with as their parents. Talks with bullies emphasize the unacceptability of bullying and reiterate established sanctions. Talks to bullies' parents inform them of their children's difficulties and enlist their cooperation in disciplining bullying behaviour and monitoring for further occurrences. Talks with victims encourage them to speak up and confirm the school’s intention to follow up cases in order to ensure that the victim is protected from further harassment. Talks
with victims' parents enlist their support in identifying victimization and providing support for their children.

This intervention reduced bully/victim problems by 50% over two years, with no displacement of bullying from the school yard to unsupervised locations (Olweus, 1991). Other positive effects included a reduction in theft, vandalism, and truancy, as well as an increase in students' satisfaction with school (Olweus, 1991; 1994; 1995). Based on follow-up data, Roland (1993) cautions that the most successful effects were seen in schools with a strong commitment to implementing the program; whereas few, and sometimes detrimental effects were evident in schools which made minimal implementation efforts.

The Norwegian Ministry of Education has recently initiated a new nationwide program to prevent and manage the problem of bullying at school. The Centre for Behavioural Research, Stavanger College, is responsible for the professional contents of the new programme. This new national project, like the previous one, focuses on the necessity of involvement from more people: school administrators, teachers, pupils, parents and a corps of resource people who can assist the schools in developing school-based action plans. A booklet for the teachers, a collection of articles for the parents and a notebook of ideas on how the pupil councils can work to improve school and class climate and contribute to the reduction of bullying have been published and distributed to all schools. (Roland & Munthe, 1997).

The methodology used in Norway to evaluate the consequences of the intervention was mostly the anonymous questionnaire that Olweus created (Olweus, 1989). Their intervention scheme was adopted by several countries, such as Canada, which transformed it by adjusting it to their cultural and social situation, although they kept intact the theoretical basis and the general planning (Pepler, et al., 1993; 1994).
1.2. United Kingdom.

Since 1991 in the UK, researchers have also conducted similar innovative strategies of intervention and this is thanks to DFE funds for a research project designed to investigate the problem of bullying in schools (Cowie & Sharp, 1992; Sharp & P.K. Smith, 1994; Smith & Sharp, 1994; Whitney & Smith, 1993; Tattum & Lane 1989; Besag, 1989; G. Smith, 1991). As in Norway, this research was initiated by the government because of concern over several suicides linked to bullying.

Similarly to Norway, the UK felt the need to approach the problem at different levels in order to create an intervention as effective as possible. Thus, in this perspective, a systemic intervention was created and called 'whole school policy' (Sharp & Smith, 1994). Sharp and Smith state:

“A whole-school policy should be central to any effort to tackle the problem of bullying in schools. The anti-bullying policy provides a framework for intervention and prevention and should be an extension of existing behaviour and equal opportunities policy.”

They explain that the policy itself is a statement of intent which guides action and organization within the school. The policy therefore establishes a clear set of agreed aims which provide pupils, staff and parents with a sense of direction and an understanding of the commitment of the school to do something about bullying behaviour.

This policy can be implemented at a number of levels:

i) Senior management.

Headteachers, senior managers and governors must be involved and participate with tackling bullying in their school by supporting the other staff during the development process and ensuring that the policy is put into practice by all staff.
ii) Staff

Teaching and non-teaching staff are to be involved and lunchtime supervisors included in attending training courses about strategies of intervention. They are trained to be more vigilant in their class and in avoiding behaviour management strategies which might humiliate or intimidate pupils: rather staff are invited to employ a direct, clear and firm approach which focuses on problem solving and enables pupils to take an active role finding a solution to the conflicts. Similarly, staff have to interact with other staff in a cooperative way, demonstrating respect and modeling positive relationship-building skills.

iii) Pupils

They are to be involved in a cooperative atmosphere which does not encourage aggressive or dominant behaviour. Usually they are involved in cooperative group work in the classroom, in planning their free time in the playground and more recently they have also been involved in another kind of activity, that seems very promising, that of peer support (Sharp, Sellors & Cowie, 1994; Cowie & Sharp, 1996). During cooperative group work they learn to talk together about their problems, to share a common goal of respecting one each other, to tackle problem solving together, and so on. Through peer support, on the other hand, a group of them learn the techniques of counselling and therapy in order to be supportive to their classmates who often have difficulties in talking with adults about their own problems.

iii) Parents.

In this form of intervention parents are also involved through meetings with school staff and children and they are invited to communicate with teachers about their children. They are also free to participate to propose particular strategies of intervention in their children’s school.
A very useful and objective integration was used to evaluate the consequences of the intervention and several methodologies were used. After around a first year of intervention a reduction of 40 or 50% was measured through playground monitoring and detailed interviews with selected pupils. Smith et al. (1994) state that "These assessment methods have their own problems, as they are longitudinal, sampling the same children some time later, and are liable to be confounded by age". In fact they estimate that there is an average reduction of 15% due to age effects (Whitney & Smith, 1993). However, after allowing for that, an estimated 'real' reduction of 25% in bullying behaviour was found (Smith et al., 1994).

In another study, Arora (1994) found that substantial reductions in bullying may not occur until after 2 years into the intervention program, and, moreover, that secondary schools are generally however more inflexible and resistant to change than primary schools.

1.3. Some examples of studies carried out in the UK to evaluate the effectiveness of anti-bullying intervention.
In this paragraph I discuss three studies which I consider to be particularly interesting. The first two because they are based on the integration of different methodologies which are quantitative as well as qualitative. This seems to me to be the best way to obtain valid and objective results about such a complex kind of study. Indeed, intervention changes children, but often in the quality of their social skills and in their perceptions of others. These are results that a quantitative measure (such as a questionnaire) cannot reveal, or only with the loss of a lot of information. The third study is particularly important for introducing my study.

In 1988-9 Smith, Boulton and Cowie carried out an anti-bullying intervention with 8 and 9 year olds, in three different schools situated in a large urban conurbation.
in northern England (Smith et al., 1993). The main ethnic mix was white and Asian pupils. Previous studies (Boulton & Smith, 1994) based on naturalistic observation of children's behaviour during the playtime, had shown that pupils tend to segregate by racial group in playground activities. Racial harassment and bullying have become issues of marked concern in certain areas (Kelly and Cohn, 1988).

Another problem that Smith, Boulton and Cowie remark on as being connected to bullying episodes was related to popularity and sociometric status. Some children were sociometrically rejected and others neglected (Coie et al. 1982) and had few or no friends at school and this could be a possible predisposing factor for later personality disturbances (Parker & Asher, 1987; Asher & Coie, 1990; Chapter 1). In this study, Smith, Boulton and Cowie chose to apply cooperative group work as an anti-bullying intervention in the classrooms. One class followed a normal curriculum (NC) through one school year, while another class experienced the cooperative group work (CGW) intervention.

To assess the effectiveness of the intervention, several methodologies were carried out such as peer nominations about relationships with classmates (sociometric status, behavioural nominations, and liking ratings), tests about general ethnic preferences and stereotypes, individual interviews in three phases over the period of intervention and playground observations in between the main assessment points. The authors found a general trend showing that the effects of the CGW intervention were modest and varied in significance level, but were consistent across a range of indicators. Over the school year they found children from the CGW classes, but not the control groups, showing greater liking for peers irrespective of race and gender, playing more with opposite sex classmates, having more positive views of other pupils in the class and, in the cases of some children, as showing less prejudice to other ethnic groups.
Encouraged by these results, a second enquiry was built on the experience of the first project (Cowie, Smith, Boulton & Laver, 1994). The researchers worked with several classes of children (ages 7-12 years) and collected test, observational and interview data again for the 2 years of the study. The results indicated that the outcomes, in terms of the responses of the children, varied markedly class by class.

Quantitative results were complemented by teacher interview data which suggested that a key ingredient in the successful implementation of the CGW method was the value system of the teacher. Where teachers were already committed to a set of values in harmony with the values of CGW, successful implementation of the method was likely. By contrast, where the teacher's values were not congruent with those of CGW, the method was more likely to be abandoned in the face of difficulty. Especially in the multi-ethnic classroom, if practitioners did not feel safe in acknowledging the polarities of values within themselves and the pupils whom they teach, then it seemed that the introduction of cooperative methods into schools was doomed to failure (Lewis & Cowie, 1993).

Cowie, Smith, Boulton and Laver identified three features of cooperative group work which in their view were fundamental to obtain effective results with this method: firstly, they argued that at least some class experience should provide children with opportunities for interaction which go beyond grouping made on the basis of friendship alone. Secondly, they concluded that children in cooperative working groups must be taught strategies for communicating with one another, sharing information and working effectively as a group in order to achieve a common goal. Third, they argued that there must be mechanisms for children in groups to address and resolve conflicts. Through regular debriefing sessions and through methods of mediation specifically taught by the teacher, children could in this way be given the skills for working through interpersonal difficulties.
Finally, I present the third study and one that is particularly important in this thesis, because my work was a more structured and articulate extension of it.

In 1994, a pilot study was carried out in England on new measures to assess the effectiveness of an anti-bullying intervention based on CGW (Cowie, Lewis, Berdondini, & Rivers, 1994). In order to reach this goal, children of a junior school were involved for three months in cooperative group work in the classroom once a week. At the beginning, in the middle and at the end of this period, all groups were interviewed about their shared activities, using the Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR, Kagan & Kagan, 1991). Originally this interview was used only as an index of changes in children, but in fact it was discovered during the study that the interview was a therapeutic intervention process itself. The cooperative work carried out in the classroom was recalled in groups and through spontaneous and guided exploration of their own and others' emotion, it was possible to stimulate the development of intersubjectivity and empathy (meant as the capacity of understanding and feeling the others' mind and emotions by Trevarthen, 1997 and Bruner, 1996) in all children (bullies, victims and bystanders). A qualitative analysis of children's sentences during those interviews indicated that children learned not only to express their feelings and thoughts more appropriately over the period, but also to observe the others' emotions and to develop the capacity to understand their different points of view and to support them at crucial points. Moreover, this method offered children the opportunity to become more responsible and more conscious about bullying and even about the aim of a cooperative group work and thus promote better understanding of the basic reasons for a curriculum of this kind (Cowie, Lewis, Berdondini, & Rivers, 1994).

In my opinion, this process can produce consistent results against bullying in a classroom because children can have clearer ideas about the focus of their work and
they have the opportunity to observe and analyse their own progress step by step and their difficulties over this work.

1.4. Research on anti-bullying intervention carried out in Italy.

Studies that investigate the problem of bullying in Italy are quite recent (Fonzi, 1995; Genta et al., 1996; Fonzi et al. 1996). After the previous studies focused on the diagnostic exploration about the presence of the phenomenon in Italian schools, some research groups then introduced the first studies by using anti-bullying strategies (Menesini, Argentieri, Baroni, Lazzari, & Spadoni, 1996; Menesini & Smorti, 1997; Berdondini, Pianeti, Pieracci, & Genta, 1997). These interventions were usually created and adapted from the original English version and referred to activities belonging to cooperative group work.

Over the second year of intervention in a middle school of Tuscany (Menesini et al., 1996), also used videotapes on bullying episodes which were chosen from several famous movies and in which different typologies of bullying were shown. These videos were used as stimuli for discussion in the classroom about the phenomenon. The effectiveness of these strategies in each year was measured using the anonymous questionnaire by Olweus and also by peer nominations and these were used either in control classes that followed the normal curriculum, or in experimental classes, where these strategies were carried out. Results of these studies presented some data which was controversial, because there were evident differences among the classes (confirming the English study by Cowie, Smith, Boulton and Laver, 1994) and these generally presented a trend to an improvement in girls and an increase of bullying in boys. However, in comparing experimental and control classes there were significant differences of improvement in experimental classes and also a higher percentage of students who told teachers about episodes after the period of intervention (Menesini et al., 1996; Menesini & Smorti, 1997).
Another group of researchers in Italy are investigating interventions in schools in Tuscany and Emilia Romagna. At the moment only a pilot study has been completed and data, concerning a small sample after only three months of intervention, have been analysed (Berdondini et al., 1997). Cooperative group work was used as an anti-bullying strategy in the classroom and two different methodologies were chosen to assess possible changes: peer nominations and an adapted version of Co-regulation Coding System (by Fogel, 1993). This methodology was originally created to analyse the quality of interaction in mother/infant dyads and considered the couple as a system in which it is possible to distinguish different styles of relationship (symmetrical co-regulation, asymmetrical co-regulation, unilateral regulation, coercion and non regulation), depending on each member's creative and innovating/passive/aggressive behaviour. Referring to this theory of dynamic systems, peer groups' relationship was considered as the product of a system in which each participant's behaviour contributes to produce the quality of the whole interaction. Thus, the focus of this study is not on the individuals, but on the group. Using this technique of coding, qualitative analysis of children’s video-recorded activities in the classroom was carried out over a period of three months. Previous results showed that after three months, qualitative changes were only evident in groups where victims were present: victim children, compared to the beginning of the period, were more active and tried several different strategies in order to be involved in the activity of their group. By contrast, the other members of their group just ignored them during the final sessions of cooperative group work, while at the beginning of the period they seemed to positively accept the victims' passive and asymmetrical presence (Berdondini et al., 1997).

Finally, another group of researchers are carrying out intervention studies in Calabria (Costabile, Palermiti, Tenuta, in progress) and are also using cooperative group work in the classroom and are video-recording children during playtime.
Researchers are analysing data concerning changes before and after the intervention through use of Olweus's anonymous questionnaire and peer nominations; but there are no published results yet.

In every Italian research group there is the intention to organize for the future a sort of whole school policy like in England, and this was clearly felt as a need by teachers too (Menesini et al., 1996; Menesini & Smorti, 1997), but at the moment this seems to be very difficult to build. Generally in Italy there are not particularly close relationships between teachers and families and hence we have to be careful when we propose some new initiative in schools. In every intervention study carried out (Menesini & Smorti, 1997) and in those which are being carried out by other research groups (Costabile et al., in progress; Berdondini et al., 1997), there were meetings with parents to introduce the study and its aims and to try to create a dialogue with them about the subject, but to date it does not appear to have facilitated a closer partnership with families.

It is also difficult to find involvement in this kind of intervention on the non-teaching staff. This may be due to the slowness of Italian bureaucracy to recognize such training as essential for the staff. This often results in the failure of whole school policy projects.

2. Cooperative group work (CGW) and Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR).

In this section a specific examination of CGW is presented as a strategy for anti-bullying intervention because I appreciate the theoretical basis on which is built, the aim of its process, and it seems to me to be potentially one of the most effective anti-bullying techniques that can be adapted to a different socio-cultural environment. That is why I chose it as basic anti-bullying intervention in the classrooms where I carried out my own study which involved the active participation of teachers.
The method of Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR, by Kagan & Kagan, 1991) is also discussed. It is an interview focused on analysing feelings and thoughts during a shared activity with other persons. In the anti-bullying project I organized in Italy (see next chapter), I used both these methodologies by integrating them. That is why I consider it important to dedicate a more specific section to each one of them in order to explain the theoretical basis on which they were created and the reasons why I chose them.


Several researchers (Orlick, 1982; Sharan, 1985; Slavin, 1987) suggest that the use of cooperative group work (CGW) methods in the classroom improves children's self-esteem and interpersonal relationships and enhances inter-racial friendships (Smith, Boulton and Cowie, 1993). CGW techniques involve children in tasks or activities which necessitate some cooperation between children in outside friendship groups in order for the task or activity to be completed (Cowie and Rudduck, 1988). Some activities are simply cooperative and some are cooperative within a team-competitive frame-work. Some activities place particular emphasis on understanding the feelings and viewpoints of other participants. As Smith, Boulton and Cowie explain (1993):

"In our view, there are certain fundamental principles which must apply in cooperative group work. The central feature is the opportunity to learn through the expression and exploration of diverse ideas and experiences in cooperative company. Group work is cooperative in the sense that no-one in any one working group is trying to get the best out of the situation; it is not about competing and winning, but about using the resources available in a group to deepen understanding, to sharpen judgment, to share ideas and support one another."
The typical activities proposed by Smith, Boulton and Cowie (1993) in Cooperative Group Work and used as anti-bullying intervention in the classroom are:

**Discussion**: Groups of children work to share ideas and understanding. The focus may be on the interpretation of, for example, a poem or a picture, the sharing of an experience, the pooling of ideas or the eliciting of opinions. Discussion may lead to enhanced individual understanding, or may lead to negotiation in the process of reaching group consensus.

**Problem-solving tasks**: The same task may be set simultaneously to small groups of three to five pupils and there may a final review with mutual criticism. Alternatively, groups of pupils may work on different aspects of the task and the different contributions are brought together and reviewed.

**Role-play activity**: Each child is given a character within the framework of an event or situation. The role becomes a mask and the characters interact according to their interpretation of the role. Although they may assigned a specific role, children are free to contribute from their own strengths or perspectives.

**Cooperative games**: Children explore different aspects of working together within a playful context, including cooperation, acceptance of one another, creative processes in the group, sheer fun and involvement in working on a shared theme. Children experience warm-up exercises and games from many cultures; they also have the opportunity to design their own cooperative games.

**Debriefing**: In the cooperative classroom, with its emphasis on open communication, interaction, negotiation and sensitivity to others' feelings, it is important to use techniques which encourage children to feed back to the teacher their feelings and
thoughts about what they are doing and how they are experiencing it. Children are regularly given the opportunity to reflect on an activity and to analyse what happened and how they feel about it. In addition, they are encouraged to think about themselves and how they relate to others. Essentially, these strategies aim to help the children to feel accustomed to feedback and to promote peer-evaluation and self-evaluation as an integral part of learning.

The same program of these different activities was examined and articulated on more specific strategies and this is explained step by step by Cowie and Sharp (1994) through a very useful guide for teachers who might be interested in using them or for researchers who want to replicate a similar study in another context.

These activities are far more than a useful technique which can be employed to brighten up the occasional lesson. Cooperative group work can lead to fundamental changes in interpersonal relationships in the classroom. It promotes the flow of communication between participants and provides an opportunity for students to develop their understanding of self and others. Through CGW teachers can provide opportunities for students to try out different roles and to practice social skills which they find problematic. It is suggested by Smith, Boulton and Cowie (1993) that:

"Furthermore, group work can provide a vehicle for solving interpersonal problems, promoting cooperative values and enabling individuals to develop a sense of identity. Finally, where children are experiencing serious interpersonal difficulties, for example, where a child is regularly fighting with others, group work offers a setting in which conflicts can be worked through in a safe environment with the support of peers and a facilitative adult. From this perspective, CGW enhances the social climate of the classroom by nurturing responsible attitudes in the students towards one another: it can do much to help children develop pro-social values and a sense of community".

In a useful overview of CGW in the UK, Cowie (1995) identified three main perspectives which she called "strands" in the development of cooperative learning in
UK. The focus in the first strand is very much on the part which the group plays in facilitating the personal growth of the individual. She describes strategies which have evolved from the person-centred psychotherapeutic approach (of Rogers, Maslow, May, Moreno, etc.), as follows: during cooperative group activities with pupils it gives teachers opportunities to develop confidence, become trusting of one another, share personal experiences with other members of the group and become more self-aware. She argues: "The philosophy which underpins this approach is that each person is unique and sees the world in a distinctive way; each person has the capacity to find out what is right for him or her" (Cowie, 1994).

The second strand focuses on cooperative group work as a mean of enhancing the child's thinking abilities. In this strand the emphasis is on the social context of learning, in particular the function of talk in enhancing the thinking processes of the individual child. Barnes, Britton and Rosen (1969) observing classroom interaction, discovered the extent to which teacher-centred talk can devalue the language of children, can stifle the language of enquiry and actually discourage children from thinking creatively. Barnes and his colleagues argued that a crucial aspect of the learning process arises through genuine dialogue and they recommended that children be given frequent opportunities to interact in small groups on tasks which demanded discussion, problem solving skills and the capacity to make constructive criticism.

More recently, research carried out by Dunne and Bennett (1990), has provoked doubts in the authors about the effectiveness of small group work as it is currently practiced in primary schools. They believed that the missing element in group work, as practiced in British classrooms, was cooperation. The children they observed were seated in groups but they were working as individuals. Dunne and Bennett (1990) found a dramatic increase in the extent and involvement of children when they were involved in cooperative group work. Teachers commented on children's capacity to develop their own ideas, reach informed conclusions and use
rich mathematical language. Low achievers benefited, most children became more independent and there was a higher quality of work overall. For Dunne and Bennett, the research demonstrated a great need to promote the value of talk for thinking in the classroom and showed that high level talk was encouraged by group work of the cooperative kind.

The third strand looks at some wider social outcomes for the child which participation in cooperative group work may imply. Cowie states:

“Learning is viewed as a means of reframing experience from new perspectives and not necessarily accepting established values. The theoretical basis for the approach is likely to be radical and progressive, though it is difficult to point to one single movement” (Cowie, 1994).

In this strand, the concern is to promote social change, but by its nature it is the strand which is most likely to clash head on with establishment values. Its supporters are educators who are concerned about rights for minorities and are actively engaged in creating a more just society. It is also most likely to challenge hierarchical structures in the organizations where the educators work and so be viewed with suspicion by those whose authority is threatened by democratic procedures.

Cowie suggests:

“The research which focuses on strand three seems to highlight some crucial issues. It would appear that the practice of CL creates conflicts within the teachers themselves and that the process of a truly cooperative, consultative and democratic approach pose a direct threat to traditional classroom practice. The isolated teacher attempting to work in this way within an organization where his or her values are not shared is faced with enormous difficulties in implementing the ideas. Teachers are very much torn between the security of their own tried and tested methods and the insecurity of venturing into new fields. Without a supportive community of colleagues and managers, the task is formidable”. (Cowie, 1994).
After this overview, Cowie concludes by saying that:

"cooperative group work can be used by people with widely different value systems. It is a point of strength that group members learn to acknowledge the existence of different perspectives. Researchers and practitioners too can acknowledge the need to make explicit their differences, share points of agreement and disagreement and learn from this dialogue - something central to cooperative group work methods themselves." (Cowie, 1994).

2.2. **Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR).**

IPR consists of a recall of a recent video-recorded interaction (a conversation, a therapy session, a group activity in a classroom, and so on) and does this through the exploration of the feelings and the relational dynamics which occurred during that situation. This is in order to become more aware about one's own and others' relational strategies and emotional involvement and, on the basis of that, to improve the following interactions with the same or with other persons. A very particular and stimulating element of this process is the possibility of looking at themselves and at the others using the video, so that the act of recalling which feelings and thoughts were involved in that interaction is facilitated. Kagan and Kagan (1991) define the IPR model as "a research tool" that:

"enables examination of psychological events in ways not previously possible. It is also the core of a training model for improving the interpersonal abilities of counsellors, teachers, prison guards, medical students- nearly anyone who could benefit from improved competence in human interactions, patients or clients. IPR also contributes to theory, the knowledge about human interaction that emerges from its applications in research, in training and in therapy."

The typical and most important characteristic of this method is the presence of two roles, the inquirer and the recaller. The inquirer facilitates recall of an event..."
through a series of open questions. The recallers have the responsibility for stopping
and starting the video at points which are importance to them. The inquirer's role,
behaviour and expectations in an IPR session are what make IPR different from self-
confrontation and more potent than stimulated recall. The authors indicate that:

"people's anxieties about involvement in psychologically intimate
humane interactions are variations on a limited number of fundamental
human interaction themes. The first was that, 'If I drop my guard the
other person will hurt me'. The fear was not based on the reality of the
setting but rather on a vague potential sensed in the situation, or like an
interpersonal allergy, stimulated by a mere hint of the potential of the
situation to harm one. These and other fears were often expressed in
terms reminiscent of the helplessness of a child, as for instance, 'I feel
as if I'm going to be picked up and hurt physically' or 'It feels as if the
other person will walk out, abandon me, and I won't be able to survive
on my own, I'll die'. A second concern was people's fears of harming
the other. People seemed to expend considerable energy in protecting
themselves from their own aggressive impulses. The theme was 'If I'm
not careful, I'll hurt you'. A third concern was that the other would
engulf us, control us, devour us. A fourth concern was that we might
engulf or devour the other. A fifth concern was of our sexual potential
in the situation, and the sixth was our perception of the sexual potential
of the other to act out on us".

The questions in IPR were based on these common fears that influence the
different kinds of social interactions. Through these questions the inquirer has to help
recallers to explore themselves and the others during the interaction they are
recalling, talk about their emotions, their thoughts and the dynamics within the
groups (or the dyads) during that situation. The inquirer role requires non-
judgmental, but assertive, probing and consists entirely of asking exploratory
questions. In summary, the inquirer's approach should be of listening, rather than
feeling, interpreting, counselling or teaching. It should focus on the videotape: then,
rather than now.
The characteristics of IPR provide the possibility of debriefing a group activity through a deeper and more accurate method as compared to a simple post-activity discussion (as usually anti-bullying sessions are structured, including CGW). The figure of the inquirer helps recallers in exploring dynamics and relational aspects that otherwise could be only superficially tackled, particularly in a case like my own study, which concerned children, because they have less capacity to nominate and verbally analyse emotions and feelings. As stated in other studies about cooperative group activities (Dunne & Bennett, 1990; Bennett, 1994), it is quite difficult to ensure that group work in a classroom goes on in a cooperative way during the first sessions, and it is important to give children the possibility to talk, to question, to explore what happened and what they felt during that activity. But, sometimes children have to be trained and helped to do this and IPR represents, in my opinion, a very good practice.

The inquirer (who, as he/she must not be present to the video-recorded activity, is not a teacher) must follow the rules explained above, of not being judgmental but assertive and of interviewing all members of the groups and listening to them. In fact, the inquirer is often functional to smooth divergences, crucial dynamics or exclusions of group members from the discussions. In other words, use of the inquirer avoids typical episodes that can often occur in an ordinary debriefing in the classroom (for example victim children who are easily ignored and may be hissed by the others, and sometimes even by the teachers).

As IPR offers just these opportunities, I thought that it could be adopted as an integrative and primary element in an anti-bullying project in the classrooms, and that it could be complementary to CGW sessions by considering it as a part of the intervention itself.

Finally, by also video-recording the IPR sessions, it is possible to analyse verbal and non verbal material in order to observe the children's different reactions during one process of an anti-bullying session, which can be used to try then to answer my
principal research questions. The next chapter discusses how I organized and structured that intervention in an elementary Italian school - obviously the teachers' help and negotiation was fundamental to this.
Part 2. The study

Chapter 4.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter states my research questions and the aims of this study and then describes the methodologies used to carry out and to analyse the data.

The results are contained in the following chapters and are divided into quantitative and qualitative data. Quoted examples of children's interviews are used and four different cases are examined.

The conclusions in Chapter 7 involve comments and analysis of the study and consideration of its limitations and innovations, as well as proposals for future research.

1. Research questions and aims of the study.

My first research question is about how anti-bullying intervention works in an Italian junior school and it uses an amalgamation of different strategies.

A pilot study carried out in England by Cowie, Lewis, Rivers, & Berdondini (1993) gave promising results on children's attitudes and used the interview of Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR- Kagan & Kagan, 1991) as a complementary element to the Cooperative Group Work. Thus, it was assumed that IPR can be used as a form of anti-bullying intervention too. For 8 months I involved teachers and children of an Italian junior school in a project based on weekly cooperative group activities. Additionally two IPR interviews were used, one at the beginning of the period and one at the end.
Thus, my main interest is to take the opportunity to analyse the improvement in children's attitudes and behaviour by using a similar intervention program - but one which focuses attention on the children's emotional expressions. During the IPR sessions what is going on in children's emotions? Do bullies, victims and bystanders react in different ways? How does the group reflect that experience?

By analysing such aspects it is also thought to be possible to know something more about the bullies and victims' expression of emotions in general. In recalling group activities do bullies tend to express anger more frequently than other children? By contrast do victims tend to be sad scared or embarrassed in these situations? If this is the case, do they overtly express these emotions or conversely do they control their expressions, thus avoiding a display of what they really feel?

One of my hypotheses is that these types of emotions (fear, sadness, lack of comfort), that victims often feel in peer groups, make some of them inhibited in showing behavioural and even emotional reactions. I suppose, in fact, that for some victims those emotions are so frequent and distressing that they create in them a sort of social defense, which consists of a dissociation, a denial of their problems and their own suffering, or a totally passive and unexpressive reaction (Partnoy, 1986; Scharansky, 1988; Russell, 1989).

Do children change their typical way of expressing their emotions after a period of intervention? If so, do they all change, or are there some particular subgroups of bullies and victims who keep their initial characteristics in spite of specific intervention?

In order to study all these aspects of bullies and victims, I integrated several methodologies which analyse the quantitative and qualitative differences between them.

First of all, I used video-recorded group interviews about children's perception of their own and the others' emotions during peer activities and analysed the two
interviews I carried out both verbally (Interpersonal Process Recall- IPR by Kagan & Kagan, 1991) and non verbally (using The Maximally Discriminative Facial Movement Coding System- MAX by Izard, 1979). The last interview eventually revealed possible changes after 8 months of intervention, but this could be in part due to the fact that children were more used to the researcher and to the structured interview itself. I assumed that a free behaviour situation, which was video-recorded over the same period of intervention and without an adult’s presence or intrusion, could be a very objective methodology to confirm or revoke the results of interviews. Thus, I also used naturalistic observations of children's social behaviour in the playground.

This latter methodology could also be used to explore possible differences within the categories of bully/victim children, in order to establish whether there are different typologies of bullies and victims.

The aims of this study may be summarized as follows:

1). To observe and explore the dynamics of the group process during IPR through a qualitative analysis of the content of children's communication during the two interviews.

2). To study differences in bully, victim and bystander children's emotional expressions by specifically analysing their verbal answers in reply to IPR questions which focus on emotions. The children's facial emotional expressions will also be evaluated while they are looking at their own video-recorded group activities (using MAX, by Izard, 1979).

3). To discover if there was a change in these expressions (through the comparison of data of verbal and non verbal emotional expressions during the two interviews) and in children's social behaviour between the beginning and the end of the period of intervention (by comparing naturalistic observations of their spontaneous behaviour in the playground as seen at the beginning and at the end of the period).
4). To explore possible differences within both the two overall categories of bullies and victims (by analysing their characteristics from data concerning spontaneous activity in the playground).

2. Sample

The study was carried out in a junior school in Scarperia, a little town near Florence, and where the families' socio-economic situation is medium-high.

The school is a building with a very big outside garden where children usually spend their playtime. This is an unusual situation in Italy because generally schools do not have outside gardens and children are compelled to spend playtime in the corridors of the school or in little playgrounds.

9 classes were involved in the study with 3 of them used as control classes (they carried out the ordinary curriculum for the whole period), and 6 as experimental classes (they were involved once a week in at least an hours Cooperative Group Work).

The ordinary curriculum of the school sometimes provided cooperative group activities in the classroom, but this was without a regular timetable, without fixed groups, and solely concerned academic topics - rather than children's discussions about their own problems or the bullying phenomenon.

In every class there were two teachers, and except for one experimental class where both teachers were involved, the intervention was co-ordinated by only one teacher per class.

Teachers of experimental classes were trained in the different intervention strategies and they were highly motivated to participate in this study.

Teachers of control classes were not interested in the research and they chose to be part of the "control" aspect of the study.
The total sample of children was 173, which divided into 56 belonging to control classes (5 bullies, 1 victims, and 50 as controls and others), and 117 belonging to experimental classes (13 bullies, 8 victims and 96 both controls and others). The children were all aged from 8 to 11 years old.

Out of the 6 experimental classes, each one was divided into working groups. A sub-sample of 35 children (13 bullies= 10 boys and 3 girls; 8 victims= 3 boys and 5 girls; and 14 controls= 9 boys and 5 girls) were selected and one control child was chosen per working group. I considered experimental classes as a homogeneous group and I carried out on them quantitative statistical analysis. In chapter 5 I justify and explain the reasons of this assumption.

3. Method

3.1. The anti-bullying intervention.

The intervention was over a period of 8 months dating from November 1995 to June 1996.

While the control classes carried out the ordinary curriculum over this same period, one a week the experimental classes were involved in activities concerning the Cooperative Group Work. In chapter 5 a more detailed description of the intervention strategies carried out class by class is presented. In the present chapter a more general explanation about the CGW activities is given:

i) Role-play.

ii) Literature as stimulus.

iii) Problem solving.

iv) Group discussion.

All these strategies referred to the English studies (Cowie & Sharp, 1994) and were adapted to Italian participants through a process of negotiation between myself and the teachers. In the presence of all the staff in the school, we firstly discussed
every technique together. Teachers chose which technique they wanted to carry out in the classroom dependent on the age of their pupils and on their own interests and sense of confidence with the methodology. During these kind of sessions I always tried to follow the spirit of CGW by stressing the importance of the group discussions and of having support among the teachers. We discussed the different class situations and considered the teachers' suggestions concerning the adaptation of the strategies to those frameworks. Teachers' personal interests and inclination to specific techniques were also respected and this highlighted that the principal aim of this intervention was to create a cooperative atmosphere in the classroom rather than following a common program of methodologies. So, for example, it was only in one class that all the strategies selected. Generally, teachers chose to co-ordinate all role-play activities and group discussion in accordance to children’s preferences. In this way teachers' participation and motivation to the project was guaranteed (see Chapter 5).

During the period of intervention, I continued to meet the whole of the teaching staff who were participating in the project and this was done once every two weeks. We discussed together the problems which had occurred in the classes, the improvements which had been noticed and the children's and teachers' difficulties. We also planned the work for the following weeks and kept a cooperative atmosphere among teachers also during supervisions. In the group of teachers I tried to create the same framework that they were supposed to organize in their classrooms.

In the more specific aspects of the intervention in the class, teachers were allowed to decide whether to keep fixed groups working together for the whole period, or whether to mix children in different groups each time. This depended on children's needs and the teacher's opinion. The groups were usually composed of five or six members, depending on the number of children in the class and there were usually four or five groups per class.
i) Role-play.

This activity was selected by myself and the teachers because it seemed to be particularly suitable for the study even for younger children. This being because the skills of empathy and the capacity to understand another person's perspective are made easier by the opportunity to hide oneself behind a role. Moreover, for children this kind of intervention can be very effective in helping them to understand and explore the emotions which are aroused by being a victim of a bullying episode or even by being a bystander.

All these aims were reached not only during the role play activity but also during the next discussion time when teachers were used to help children in exploring the simulated situation and in general problems related to bullying.

In the section of role-play we used there were different pre-structured situations concerning the phenomenon of bullying and seen from different perspectives, so that it was possible to explore the bully's point of view, or that of victim or of bystanders. But there were also situations concerning the victim or bully's parents' reactions, and others where children had to play the role of teachers facing different episodes of bullying, and to play their possible reactions and intervention tactics.

Some of these situations, therefore, were very useful to explore the motivations behind bullying and the different types of situations experienced, such as that: bullying can be provoked by specific behaviour, bully children could be victims somewhere else, some social contexts can encourage the phenomenon, each one of us sometimes bullied someone else, and so on. Other situations were more focused towards finding positive solutions to the problem. In this case, children were asked to play a real situation of bullying that they had experienced or a created one, and then, to play it again with a positive solution that was usually introduced by the bystanders' intervention.
Another section of situations proposed to children concerned the consequences of bullying; in those cases the situations were about adults who remembered being and were able to meet the person who bullied them at school. Children had to continue the situation and imagine their possible reactions and conversation. This was important to help children understand that being bullied can have long-term consequences and might influence the victims' whole lives.

Usually the classes were divided up for group work and teachers gave every group a different situation to play in front of the class. They tended to give each child roles which were different to his/her real and typical behaviour, so that bullies could try to play the role of victims and victims those of bystanders. Children involved in playing bystander roles had to tackle critical situations and attempt to solve them positively through their own intervention strategies.

ii). Literature as stimulus

This kind of anti-bullying strategy was only used in a few classes of older children because it indicates an ability to read and write which younger children might have more difficulties with. However, it was considered a useful intervention tactic by teachers who chose it, because it gave children the possibility to analyse typical bullying situations, through the stories they read and very often also to think about the consequences and encouraged attempts to tackle them.

In Italy we used stories such as The Daydreamer by Ian McEwan (1994), or The Diddakoi by Rumer Godden (1991). Usually teachers read the interesting parts of the books in the classroom and then children were involved in class discussions about the problem of bullying. This was effected through questions, analysis of solutions, personal stories, and so on. At other times, children were asked to write personal stories about this subject, or to refer to real facts or invented ones, and then teachers read all the compositions to the class. Sometimes the poems or books which were read
were also used as a basis for role-playing the situation. In this case even teachers were involved in the action, for example playing the role of bully and answering the children's questions about his/her behaviour. As in role-play, the consequent discussion was a very important phase of this activity.

iii). Problem solving.
This kind of strategy was used just by one teacher because the others found it too complex and time consuming to be carried out by such young children. I suggested that she followed the indications given by Cowie and Sharp (1994) about Quality Circles - that is a sort of structured problem solving exercise which is to be carried out by a group of persons.

The Quality Circle process foresees five important steps (it was decided to use a simplified version with teachers):

a) Identifying the problem: the group members voted in order to make a group decision as to which problem should be chosen out of the ones that were suggested and that tended to be defined by their own interests.

b) Analysing the problem: the members of each group followed a structured procedure (Fig. 1) and asked themselves one question: Why? Several possible causes may be identified at this stage. The group then ask 'Why?' of each first-level reason and continue to analyse the causes of problem until they identify the original causal factor.

At this point in the original version of Quality Circles there would be a sort of survey, which involved interviewing a sample of children about their experiences of being bullied, or making selected observations during an agreed time-slot of behaviour in a particular area of the play-ground. This was to assess the validity and objectivity of the causes the group identified. But in this study this part was not carried out because teachers considered it too complex a skill for primary school children.
c) Developing solution: in this part of the process children have to follow the same rules of the 'Why?Why?' diagram, but this time they have to answer the question: How? This allows them to be able to analyse the possible solutions and to examine every solution that is suggested. They have to continue this process until it culminates in some practical action that can be taken. If it fails to do this, then the idea is abandoned (see Fig. 1).

d) Presenting a solution: The QC members prepare a presentation of their solution to a 'management team', in our case composed of teachers and the rest of the class, who have to facilitate the implementation of the solution if possible.

Through the single steps they presented a poster of their Quality Circle process and they finally presented a proposed solution. The management team judged the situation and accepted the proposal with some modifications.
iv). Group discussion.

In the class each group decided the subject they wanted to tackle, they talked about it and then each group presented their discussion to the rest of the class. Sometimes, however, the discussion was carried out by the whole class without using groups. This process was preferred because, for children, it became the moment to solve the little daily problems inside the class, whether related with the problem of bullying or not,
and they showed that they really needed a moment like this. Sometimes these discussions revealed very serious problems and it was an appropriate occasion for the whole class, and even for teachers, to face subjects usually avoided.

3.2. Peer nominations.

Before and after the intervention, all nine classes were involved in a process of peer nominations about the bullying behaviour in order to identify the bullies and the victims inside each class. In this way it was also possible to have a quantitative measure to assess the effectiveness of intervention in experimental classes as compared to the controls.

To select the categories, I used the following procedure: the researcher presented the problem of bullying to each class, talking with children about it and giving them a clear definition of what 'bullying' is considered. I used the definition used by Olweus (1989):

*We say that a child or a young person is being bullied or picked on when another child or young person, or a group of children or young people, say nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a child or a young person is hit, kicked, threatened, locked inside a room, sent nasty notes, when no one ever talks to them and things like that. These things can happen frequently and it is difficult for the child or the young person being bullied to defend himself or herself. It is also bullying when a child or young person is teased repeatedly in a nasty way. But it is not bullying when two children or young people of about the same strength have the odd fight or quarrel.*

At this point each child in the class was given a paper with this written definition and two questions:

*Write the name of three classmates of yours that you consider bullies.*

*Write the name of three classmates of yours that you consider victims.*
The procedure was anonymous and it was explained to children that they need not identify their paper in any way and that they could write their own name as bully or victim, if they believed it to be so, by writing their complete name. For each child I then calculated the percentage of nominations as bully and as victim that he/she had received from the whole class.

Applying the methodology indicated by Bowers, Smith and Binney (1992) to the specific sample, in order to fall into the 'bully' category a child had to receive 45% or more peer nominations as a bully and less than 33% as a victim. To fall into the 'victim' category a child had to receive 45% of peer nominations as victim and less than 33% as bully. To be classed as bully/victim a child had to receive more than 33% of both bully and victim nominations. To be classed as a 'bystander' a child had to receive less than 33% of both bully and victim nominations. Children considered by Salmivalli and her colleagues (1996 and pp.31) as 'defenders' and 'outsiders' probably fell into this latter category. The other possible situations resulted in the category called 'other'.

3.3. CGW children's evaluation.

To find out if children in experimental classes appreciated the Cooperative Group Work of intervention as compared to children of control classes (who participated to group work only sometimes and not about bullying problems) a very simple questionnaire was used at the end of the period of intervention in every control and experimental class (Fig. 2).

Referring to a study by Boroa, M. and Boroa (1987), Self-esteem: a Classroom Affair, each child was given a paper with the question: "Did you like the group activities carried out this year?", and a drawing of 5 facial expressions ranging from very sad to very happy. Under every face there was the corresponding answer definition:

1. not at all. (coded 1)
2. a very little (coded 2)
3. some (coded 3)
4. quite a lot (coded 4)
5. a lot (coded 5).

Fig. 2 The CGW valuation.

Did you like the group activities carried out this year?


In this study, the 6 experimental classes were involved in IPR interviews at the beginning of the period of intervention and at the end. The first time concerned their Cooperative Group Work and the last time involved their free play in the playground, so that I could observe them whilst they recalled both the situations: the organized one and the free one.

The IPR version that Cowie adapted in 1993 for young children was translated into Italian and those questions were used (see Table 1). Each group was video-recorded by two researchers for 5 minutes during the class activity and for 3 minutes during the playground. The same day or the day after, when children could easily remember what had happened, each group was invited by me (who was not present at
the activity) to a room in the school. Children could sit down, and then I made the following statement:

"We are going to watch your group during the activity we video-recorded this morning (or yesterday). You have to watch this video very carefully, and try to remember which were your feelings and your thoughts during those moments. Every time you would like to comment on something, or say something that today you could not say for any reason, you can ask me to stop the video, and talk. When you finish your comments, we will start to watch the video again until there will be another request to stop, or the end of the tape. It is important you recall the actual moment, not what you are feeling now. Have you any questions before starting?"

After that, I switched on the video-recorder and let the children watch themselves until they asked me to stop in order to comment on a fact or ask some questions amongst themselves. Some groups watched the videotape for the whole duration, without interrupting. In those cases, at the end of the tape I started the interview by asking some general questions in order to stimulate their comments. Although respecting the inquirer's rules, during spontaneous conversations among children I tried to help them in their emotional exploration through IPR questions and I involved every member of the group by asking each one at least one question per section.

Each interview lasted 20 minutes.

All the interviews were video-recorded and then coded in items of verbal and nonverbal expressions used.

1). Verbal expressions.

All the IPR group interviews were transcribed.

In each group there was at least one bully or one victim and for each group I chose one control child, so that I obtained the sub-sample of 35 children.
The verbal coding was carried out separately by myself and two undergraduate students. Cohen's Kappa coefficient was used for every category (see Table 2 and Table 3) to calculate the agreement among the coders. The mean Kappa score was .81.

I composed two check lists of verbal expressions which concerned the IPR context. Both lists were used to analyse the capacity of bullies, victims and bystanders to define and describe "facts", "behaviours" and "feelings" which occurred during the video-recorded activity: one list is composed of "descriptive" categories and concerns the general contents of children's sentences during the interview (see Table 2). The other check list is more focused on the capacity of participants to express emotions and, particularly, on which emotions are mentioned by bullies, victims and bystanders when answering the questions: "How were you feeling then?", "Did you have any feeling towards the other person?", "What do you think the other felt about you?".

On the first check list, I considered two possible situations that could occur: 1) children talked among themselves during their spontaneous comments and 2) they answered IPR questions.

In every group the dynamics of the interview were very different: in some groups there were a lot of spontaneous comments among the members, but in others I had to involve children in the exploration of their feelings through IPR questions because they were not able to talk spontaneously. Moreover, some children talked a lot, creating a very innovative and lively conversation with the others and with me, while some other children were very silent and simply answered direct questions. This first check list was just used to code these differences among the groups in the two interviews (see chapter 6) and offered possibilities of observing changes between the first and the second interview in the group dynamics, and individual progress in exploring one's own and the others' feelings.
# Table 1. IPR version for children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SELF EXPLORATION</strong></th>
<th>What thoughts were going through your mind at the time?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How were you feeling then?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you recall any physical sensation?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If the sensation had a voice, what would it say?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>VIEW OF OTHERS</strong></th>
<th>Did you have any feelings towards the other person(s)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do you think others felt/thought about you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do you think the other(s) saw you at that point?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>OWN BEHAVIOUR</strong></th>
<th>Anything you were not saying?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anything got in the way of how you wanted to behave in that situation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What did you sense was happening at that point?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>VALUES AND ASSUMPTIONS</strong></th>
<th>Anything you liked about what was happening?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do you imagine gave them the right to say/do that?</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>HOPES AND INTENSIONS</strong></th>
<th>Any fantasies about what might happen next?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What got the way?</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>REFLECTION</strong></th>
<th>Has this happened to you before?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any idea how you came to do that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can you make any sense of that?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CLOSURE</strong></th>
<th>Anything else?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you want to take this further?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Definitions of "descriptive" categories:

- **Account or comments about “other”:** not concerning the episode that they were watching.

- **Spontaneous comments about the issue in the video:** when they asked to stop the video in order to say something about what was going on.

- **Questions or conversations among themselves:** not necessarily concerning the issue in the video.

- **Answers IPR questions:**
  - a). silence or refusal to talk. (“nothing”, “I don’t remember”);
  - b). analysis of own feelings (“I think I was...”, “I felt...”);
  - c). analysis of the other’s feelings (“I think he/she was/felt...”);
  - d). analysis of own behaviour (“I was doing...something...because...”);
  - e). analysis of the others’ behaviour (“He/she did it...because...”).

The second check list concerns the expression of emotions. The categories I chose are about explicit definitions of "basic" emotions. Considering that they referred to verbal expressions concerning a social framework, for some of them I used a different definition from that given by the literature (see Izard, 1979, and chapter 2): joy, anger, sadness, surprise, fear, involvement (corresponding the emotion called by Izard "interest"), expressing contempt (including also "disgust"), feeling shame. I chose these emotions because they seemed to me to be quite clear to identify in terms of children's verbal expressions and, I argued, formed the main reported emotions during the recalling of shared activities with peers. This is one of the principal roles of IPR. They were, in fact, quite indicative about the different children's perception of the same experience and these data were easily comparable to the non verbal expressions which occurred during the recalling of the video.
Finally, they could also be crucial indices of changes after a period of intervention, even simply for the quantity of times they were identified and named during the second interview as compared to the first one. One of the aims of the intervention process, is, in fact, to improve children's awareness about their own social responsibilities and capacities, and I think that being able to define and to name the emotions felt and perceived in others during an interaction is an important step towards this goal. From this point of view, I also chose these emotional categories because observing and assessing how children became used to expressing them during IPR sessions, seemed to me to be one of the most important aspects to understand how, and how differently, an intervention activity influences children during its process. That is why I also considered the "empathy" category as I assume empathy was the fundamental element necessary to identify differences among children in their emotional communications both during and after the intervention strategies.

Another aspect that these categories offered was to analyse the presence of expressions which portrayed anger and fear in bullies and victims as these are often related to emotional disorders. The possibility of verbal denial or the minimization of one's own emotions was another possibility which allowed me to explore one of my hypothesis about the victims' lack of emotional expressions (see chapter 2).

Table 3 contains the definitions of every category.
Table 3. Definition of emotional categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>“I was happy because...”, “I laughed a lot with them...”, “I really enjoyed!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>“I was angry because...”, “He/she made me feel mad, because...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>“I was sorry because...”, “I felt sad...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>“I was scared of their comments”, “I was scared of the video-camera”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>“I didn’t expected it”, “He/she surprised me at that time, because...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement/interest</td>
<td>“I was very concentrated in our task”, “I was involved in the play”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing contempt/disgust</td>
<td>“They seemed to me very stupid”, “I thought I didn’t want to spend my time with people like them”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling shame</td>
<td>“I was a bit ashamed”, “I felt like a dumb, because I felt shame”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial of own emotions</td>
<td>“I didn’t feel anything”, “I just felt normal”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>“I was sorry because he/she was sad”, “I felt happy because he/she laughed a lot”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These categories were obtained from the individual answers which were presented in reply to the questions concerning one's own feelings in the group situation and feelings towards other group members. As I asked these questions to each one of the participants in both interviews, I was able to quantify the emotional expressions and use each child's answers to calculate the frequency of the above mentioned emotions, and also to compare them statistically.

I also analysed:

- how many times each one interrupted others before they could answer or comment on something.
- how many times they were interrupted by others before answering or commenting on something.

These latter categories gave the opportunity to explore the relational dynamics inside the group during the IPR sessions, and to observe what kind of changes occurred after the period of intervention among its members.

II). Non verbal expressions.
I thought that it could be useful to also observe the children's non verbal emotional expressions during IPR, in order to have a stronger element concerning which children's reactions occurred during an intervention process. Indeed, watching televised pictures of oneself involved in a social interaction with others, does stir up different emotions. Besides the verbal recalling, some are related to those really felt during the video-recorded situation and this is a crucial part of IPR. Thus, I argued that the non verbal aspect of emotional expressions could provide useful information which might be used to answer my research questions.

Literature about emotions and especially about measurements of emotions, describes several different methodologies, and in particular, I was interested in those that analyse the facial expressions. This was based on the assumption that there is a relationship between certain facial expressions and internal states (see chapter 2). As the framework in which IPR was carried out was quite restrictive in terms of body movements (children used to sit on a sofa in front of the television and were very close one each other, sometimes even packed together), I thought that it might be better to only analyse facial expressions. Thus, I chose to use the method of Maximally Discriminative Facial Movement Coding System (MAX) suggested by Izard (1979), because it is a method of proven validity (even if usually applied to infants' expressions) that offers the possibility of reading facial movements objectively. Izard (1979b) says:

"the principal objective in developing Max was to provide an efficient, reliable, and valid system for measuring the emotion signals in the facial behaviors of infants and young children. However, with some modifications in the descriptions of the appearance changes the system can be used to measure emotion signals at any age." (Izard, 1979).

MAX can be used to identify nine fundamental emotional expressions of interest, joy, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust, contempt, fear and feeling shame, by
special attention to gaze behaviour and head movement. Thus, these emotions could be compared to those I chose in the verbal expression process and allowed a more complete exploration of what happens during a session of IPR and the differences which exist in bullies, victims and bystanders during the act of recalling a shared activity - either cognitive (through the verbal expression) or emotional (through the facial expression). Moreover, in this way it was also possible to compare the first and the second interviews by observing possible changes in the impact that this methodology had on children; either in their capacities to verbal expression their emotions or in their non verbal emotional reactions.

This method is derived from the more detailed Facial Movements Coding System (FMCS) which includes all of the 48 movements units or appearance changes which might be observed in the expression of the fundamental emotions and pain.

Izard says that:

"MAX was derived after experience with the FMCS and suggests that it could be streamlined by grouping the anatomically related movements and eliminating those that were not essential in the identification of any of the 10 target affect expressions. The abridged, reorganized list of appearance changes that constitute MAX falls into 3 groups, served by 3 relatively independent sets of muscles in the 3 regions of the face: the Forehead/Eyebrows/Nasal root, Eye/Nose/Cheek and Mouth/Lips/Chin." (Izard, 1979).

Thus MAX has only 27 codes (appearance change units) and requires only 3 runs of each video segment, one for each of the 3 theoretical regions. Izard continues:

"The objectivity of Max stems from the fact that coders using the system in the first phase of analysing facial behaviors make judgments only regarding the presence or absence of clearly defined and illustrated facial movement or appearance changes. Judgments are made independently for each of the 3 regions. The coder does not make any judgments of the emotional signal value of the movements. The emotion or affect signals, discrete emotion expressions, and
combinations of two expressions are identified in the second phase of the analysis." (Izard, 1979).

In this study, the video-recordings of IPR interviews were coded in the first phase (coding the presence or absence of clearly defined and illustrated facial movement) by two coders (at the Department of Psychology, University of Padova). One of them, Dott. Marco Dondi, was the trainer of the other. These researchers did not know the children's bully/victim classification. The inter-coder agreement was .86 and was calculated using the Cohen's Kappa coefficient. I carried out the second phase of the analysis, in other words the identification of the emotion or affect signals, the discrete emotion expressions and the different combinations of the two expressions, by using the rules and formulas (movement or code combinations) that Izard indicates as identifying the fundamental emotions: interest, joy, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust, contempt, fear and feeling of shame. We decided to analyse the children's faces only whilst they were watching the video of their activity, because at this point the children were much more expressive than when they were talking and this material was more suitable for being coded. In fact, emotional involvement during the observation of one's own taped response is very strong.

The common time base used to video-record each child's face was 2 minutes. So for each one of them I calculated the duration of every emotion and non coded facial movements observed over the 2 minutes of video-recording, which was taken from either the first or the second interview and I compared the data presented by bullies, victims and controls. As this method of coding is very time consuming and some videotapes were not of good quality, we selected a sub-sample on which to apply this technique. The sample was composed of 7 bullies, 6 victims and 6 controls (of whom only 2 were present in both the sessions).

3.5. Playground video-recording.
The 35 participants of the experimental sample were also video-recorded during playtime by using naturalistic observation and this was continued over the whole period of intervention.

Following the suggestions of related literature (Boulton, 1995; 1993; Boulton & Smith, 1993; Humphreys & Smith, 1987), there was a two week period which served as training for two undergraduate observers and this was presented by the third observer (myself).

The previous period of video-recording was also used to enable the children to accustom themselves to the presence of an observer and to help ensure that their behaviour would not be influenced by the observer's presence. At the beginning, children often tried to talk to the observer in the playground but as he/she did not respond to any of them, after a few days children spontaneously carried on with their free activities.

On each day of observation, a randomly ordered list of participating pupils was prepared. This list gave the order in which pupils would be observed in the playground. Each pupil was the focus of observation in turn and he/she was video-recorded for three minutes each time. At the end of the period we obtained 24 minutes of video-recording for each child. However, they were already involved in the intervention and so their behaviour in the playground was probably influenced by this factor. Only the first 6 minutes and the last 6 minutes of the video-recording were analysed for each child.

A behavioural check list derived by Costabile, Palermiti and Tenuta (1997) was used to code the children's activity. I could not use the complete list because the distance between the focused child and the videocamera did not offer, in the majority of cases, the possibility to analyse the verbal and the facial expressions. Additionally, I introduced some new behavioural categories that could be useful to identify possible "clumsy" children. (Kalverboer, 1990). All these categories were very useful to
observe and analyse the social behaviour of every typology of children at the beginning and at the end of the intervention.

The coding was carried out by calculating, for each child, the duration of each type of behaviour within the total video-recording time concerning him/her.

The average inter-observer agreement for coding variables (type of play, aggressive and not aggressive children, clumsy and not clumsy children, solitary play and group play) was .84 according to Cohen's Kappa coefficient. The other two coders did not know the children's bully/victim classifications.

Table 4 lists the categories I used. I compared the time duration of these behavioural categories among the three groups of children (bullies, victims and bystanders), and for all the groups between the beginning of the period and the end.

By observing the videos of the playground, in particular the first one, where children were supposed to be more "natural" because they were not yet influenced by the intervention process it was possible to analyse the behaviour of bullies and victims more specifically.

In particular, categories concerning "aggressive behaviour" in bullies and "clumsy behaviour" in victims, were particularly observed and analysed (see Table 4).

I used these distinctive categories to explore possible differences within the groups of bullies and victims (as shown in Chapter 5).
Table 4. Behavioural categories for playground observation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEHAVIOURAL CATEGORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To smile/laugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To embrace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To kiss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To take someone by hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To caress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gaze a child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gaze an adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To walk to a child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To walk to an adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To hand an object ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solitary:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationary position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solitary play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self manipulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clumsy behaviour</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of coordination in running</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of coordination in playing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with an object (such as a or a rope)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of coordination in jumping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rules play:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hide-and-seek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role-play</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rough-and-tumble:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To pursue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To beat with open hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To beat with an object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To jump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To struggle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aggressive behaviour:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To pursue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To push</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To beat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To kick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To bite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To spit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical threat:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition of face and body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gesture of beating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gesture of kicking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gesture of biting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

In this chapter the intervention strategies carried out in each experimental class over the 8 months of project are discussed. Common characteristics of the intervention processes that linked all the 6 classes and made them a reasonably homogeneous sample are explained. Finally, an exploration of possible different outcomes is presented.

Thus, the aim of this chapter is to explain the situation of the intervention project by class, in order to offer a clearer idea about what happened within the experimental group. At the same time, this analysis of the common and different elements among the classes provides the justifications for the quantitative statistical analysis (presented in the next chapter) used on this sample.

1. How the intervention was organized class by class.

In the previous chapter all the strategies proposed and used by the teachers in their class were explained. It was also briefly mentioned that each teacher, after a training focused on all these techniques, could choose which one to carry out with pupils and how to compose the groups of children. In this section, the common basis and differences among these choices are analysed.

A first element that was in common among all the classes was the concept of cooperation. Great emphasis was used during the training of teachers in order to highlight this aspect of the intervention project. The fact that some persons work in a group does not necessarily mean that they use cooperative rules. What I tried to do with teachers during their training, just as they tried to do with their pupils, was to ensure that whatever activity the group was carrying on, the aim and the results had to be common to all the members of the group, and that each one of them had to participate in some way. Generally, a very important rule for any
group work was that members had to respect the others' ideas and opinions and the others' work and contribution. The group work was always based on activities carried out together by all the members who took turns, or carried out independently by each member, who, simultaneously with the others, worked out his/her own task. In this second case, the individual contributions were essential in order to achieve the final goal of the activity that was presented by the whole group.

Another aspect that was always common to all the classes was the debriefing after the intervention activity. This part of the class work was highlighted by me as the most important in the whole cooperative project and basically represented the main activity of the intervention programme. Indeed, I believe that the possibility of discussing the group work in front of the whole class, in order to compare possible similarities or differences in the interpersonal dynamics, is the factor that makes cooperation possible. Through the comparison of different perspectives and emotions and the exploration of similar or opposite impressions experienced during the same situation, the group can clarify what has not been said during the activity and improve the capacity of empathy and communication among the members. Moreover, this task offers to the teachers and the children a clear opportunity to point out specific difficulties about a technique or a group and to plan together possible solutions. The final aim of this activity was to build together the history of the intervention class, through the analysis of the group processes, step by step, making the teachers as well as the pupils responsible for that. In order to be sure that the debriefing was carried out in a creative and productive way, a series of questions were prepared before the beginning of the intervention project (referring to some of the IPR questions) and each teacher asked them in his/her class during this activity, involving all the children.

All the teachers who participated in this project completely agreed with these principles, and this guaranteed a strong motivation in all of them during the whole work. The supervisions I carried out with them, once every two weeks, were
particularly useful in keeping this enthusiasm alive, and in making them feeling a cooperative group of peers too. These meetings also provided the possibility to regularly plan a common basis for the different class interventions and to agree time by time on common ways to carry out similar processes (such as the debriefings). Also during supervisions it was possible to compare completely different strategies used by teachers in their classes and to discuss together about them. With regard to this aspect, the classes that more distinguished themselves from the others in their intervention program were those composed of the oldest children (in the Italian system corresponding to the fifth and last year of elementary school). Teachers of these classes, in fact, decided to carry out the literature-based intervention as a stimulus plus, in one of the two classes only, problem solving, besides role-play and group discussion (that basically were carried out in all the classes). The next section of this chapter is dedicated to a detailed explanation class by class about the intervention program, in order to offer a clear reference for the single class situation.

2. The intervention programme by class.

In this section, the techniques used in every class over the 8 months of intervention are explained, according to the teachers' reports and to my notes, collected during the supervision meetings. I asked teachers to keep a diary of their intervention program, writing what happened in every session, what strategy was carried out and which possible difficulties or overt successes emerged during it. In fact, teachers were not so precise in their reports, but they described accurately enough the different activities carried out every time. Moreover, during the meetings with them I used to collect some comments and notes about the classes and what was going on in each of them. These were particularly useful in order to highlight in the following sections specific cases of improved or worsened children. Unfortunately, not all the cases of strong changes (remarked by the peer nominations, for
example) were registered or noticed by the teachers and so for some of them it was not possible for me to go back to the individual history.

A quite schematic report is presented in the following paragraphs, class by class. The first day of the intervention is not mentioned, because it was the same for all the classes and was based on the composition of the groups and on a cooperative activity. The aim of this task was to create the name of the group and to draw a symbol that had to mark it for the rest of the year. All the members of each group had to contribute to the task, following turns. This activity was video-recorded in every class, group by group, and all the children were interviewed on that during the first session of IPR.

Finally, the activity of role-play, carried out in all the classes, always followed the same order of sketches. This order was in fact the one I used during the teachers' training, and it was agreed with them on keeping it also with pupils. In some classes in which special attention was dedicated to this activity, children were involved in inventing and playing new situations.

The classes were composed of: two classes of the third year, with children 8-9 years old (here called III A and III B), two classes of the fourth year, with children 9-10 years old (here called IV A and IV B) and two classes of the fifth year, with children 10-11 years old (here called V A and V B). In Table 5 all the intervention strategies carried out class by class are exposed.

---

1 The name of the classes do not correspond to the reality.
2.1 Class III A.

The teacher involved in the intervention carried out the activities with her class once a week.

November '95:
- role-play until the end of the month;

December '95:
- role-play for two sessions;
- group discussion;
- cooperative games;

January '96:
- role play for the whole month;

From February to June '96:
- group discussions and cooperative games according to children's requests.

In every session the last 20 minutes were dedicated to the debriefing about the activity of the day.

In this class all the children were enthusiastic about the intervention project, apart from two bullies, of whom one kept an anti-social behaviour until the end of the period and a strong indifference towards the others. The case study mentioned in chapter 7 a bully who did not improve at all after the intervention is referred to him (see Paolo's case, par.2.2.1).

In the same class, otherwise, a girl bully improved a lot, becoming at the end of the period completely extraneous to bullying episodes and one victim, who at the beginning was particularly excluded by peers increased her self-esteem and was able to find some friends in the class.

2.2 Class III B.

The teacher carried out the activities once a week for the whole period of 8 months.
November '95:
- role-play until end of December '95.

January '96:
- group discussions;
- cooperative games;

February '96:
- role-play and invention of new situations to play;

From March '96 to June '96:
- group discussions and cooperative games according to children's request.

After every activity the teacher dedicated 20 minutes to the debriefing.

In this class children appreciated a lot the activities, and there were no particular difficulties or problems, even if looking at the peer nominations scores there were some changes of status like in the other classes.

2.3 Class IV A.

The teacher carried out the activities once a week, a part from a period over Spring in which she involved children in these sessions once every two weeks (because of the large quantity of curriculum work to do).

November '95:
- role-play.

December '95:
- role-play for the whole month;

January '96:
- cooperative games;
- group discussion;
- role-play;

February '96:
- role-play about new situations;
- one session on literature as a stimulus (an episode from *The Daydreamer* by Ian McEwan was read by the teacher in front of the class);

March '96:
- role-play also inspired to the read book;
- group discussions;

April '96:
- cooperative games;
- group discussions;

May and June '96:
- role-play;
- group discussions;
both according to the children's request.

After every activity the teacher dedicated 20 minutes to the debriefing.

In this class one girl bully particularly improved her behaviour, and this was also mentioned by her classmates during the second session of IPR (see pp. 155, Denise). Also a girl victim improved her social capacity and became a bystander. By contrast, another girl who joined the class in January '96 became the new victim of the class. The teacher could not explain this episode clearly, apart from highlighting that this child was particularly shy and that there was not time enough for her and for the rest of the class to create a close relationship. Otherwise, it is interesting to notice that these two girls, the ex-victim and the new one, became friends quite quickly.

2.4. Class IV B

The teacher carried out the activities once a week for the whole period. From March '96 she had to change a member of a group because of his incapacity to get on with the rest of the group and his continuous disruptions towards the others. The child was a bully and he used to suffer for quite serious emotional disorders. He improved quite a lot since he changed the group and joined some children who
accepted him much better than the previous peers. Over the period of intervention project the teacher became aware of the seriousness of this case, and was able to contact the family of the child for some meetings. After a quite troubled process the family accepted to start a systemic therapy. It is likely that the improvements of this child at the end of the intervention project are particularly due to this fact.

November '95:
- role-play.

From December '95 to March '96:
- role-play;

April '96:
- cooperative games;
- group discussions;

May '96:
- group discussions;
- literature as a stimulus (twice);

June '96:
- group discussions.

After every activity the teacher dedicated 20 minutes to the debriefing.

In this class there was the girl bully who improved impressively at the end of the academic year, and to whom I dedicated a case study in chapter 7 (see Luisa's case, par. 2.1.1).

2.5. Class VA.

In this class the teacher carried out the activities once a week, and she basically facilitated all the strategies I proposed during the teachers' training with her class.

November '95:
- role-play;

From December '95 to February '96:
- quality circle;
March '96:
- group discussions;
- cooperative games;
- literature as a stimulus;
- role-play;

April '96:
- role-play;
- cooperative games;
- literature as a stimulus;

From May to June '96:
- writing a piece on bullying simultaneously with V B;
- literature as a stimulus;
- group discussions.

In this class there was a boy victim, very frail and short whom the others (especially two bullies of the class) used to tease. He improved a lot during the project in his self-esteem, becoming able to be included in the football team of his class. In fact in the second interview of IPR all his group mates highlighted this fact, and first of all the two bullies. I dedicated to him a case study in chapter 7 (see Marco's case, par. 2.1.2). Also in this class there was a girl victim who kept the same status at the end of the year, but who demonstrated a very strong capacity of assertiveness during the second interview of IPR and whom I quoted in chapter 7. She was usually teased and bullied by two girls bully, of whom one decreased in her bully score at the end of the period (in fact she became a bystander) and the other worsened. In fact, the episode I quoted in chapter 7 showed how, even if both of them accepted the victim in their games, unlike the beginning of the period of intervention, they still used to treat her in a different way compared to other children (see pp.162).
Finally, in this class, one child who was at the beginning of the year an "other" tending to bully, became a "bully", as well as another boy who was at the beginning of the year "bystander".

2.6. Class V B.
In this class both the teachers participated in the intervention project. They used to carry out the activities once a week together. They also collaborated the last two months with the teacher of V A in involving children in writing up a piece on bullying that they played at the end of the academic year (also considered as literature as a stimulus). The activity was the same, but in each class a different drama was created and played in the same occasion. This task is quite usual in elementary schools, especially for the classes that are at the conclusive year. In this sense, these two classes joined together an intervention strategy and an ordinary activity of the curriculum.

November '95 and December '95:
- role-play;
- literature as stimulus;

January '96:
- cooperative games;
- group discussions;

From February '96 to April '96:
- literature as a stimulus;
- group discussions;
- cooperative games;

May and June '96:
- role-play and writing up of a piece simultaneously with VA;
- group discussions.

After every activity the teachers dedicated 20 minutes to the debriefing.
In this class there was a bully who improved his behaviour very much, and at the end became a bystander. At the same time there was a girl victim who, by contrast, did not improve at all in her social difficulties. I dedicated a case study to her in chapter 7 (see Alessia's case, par. 2.2.2).

2.7. Common and different points class by class.

As can be seen in Table 5, the main part of the intervention strategies was in common among all the classes. Basically all of them carried out activities of role-play and group discussions, organized in the same way and following the same rules. Some of them also used literature as a stimulus, and only one carried out a cycle of Quality Circle. The classes that used a simpler intervention program were, of course, IIIA and III B, because of the age of children. It was considered that for them, for example, an activity like problem solving or literature was too complicated. Moreover, children first requested to carry out role-play and group discussions, even after the teacher proposed to them other possible techniques.

The real point that was always in common to all the classes, as already explained, was the debriefing. According to the system on which the teachers and I built the intervention, this was the main part of the activity, and every time 20 minutes were dedicated to it. Also, the questions and the way to conduct it were absolutely the same in all the classes, basing on previous agreements. In order to reach the aim of a deep communication and the development of empathy among the children, I considered that this activity was even more important than the specific "cooperative" strategy carried out. I think that it is in the occasion of the debriefing that children can really understand the sense of the whole intervention, and thus they can become more aware about what they are doing together and how they can do it better.

This is the reason why I considered all these classes as a homogeneous group, on which I could apply quantitative statistics, as in the next chapter. They carried out, in fact, in the same quantity and following the same rules, the main and
most important part of the intervention, according to me, and the activity that could change children the most.

Table 5. Number of sessions dedicated to every intervention strategy class by class over the period Nov.'95-June '96.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Role-play</th>
<th>Literature</th>
<th>Group discuss.</th>
<th>Cooper. Games</th>
<th>Problem solving</th>
<th>TOT.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III A</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III B</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV B</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V A</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V B</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Possible different outcomes

With regard to the outcomes of this project and possible differences among the classes, reading through the teachers' reports and my notes, it is not evident that there was any change among the experimental classes over the whole period. There was not a class in which particular problems were found, because basically in all the classes there were difficult children as well as those whose behaviour improved. An outcome that indeed characterized all of them, as explained in the next chapter, is the quite strong "movement" within each class of the bully/victim status of children. In fact, there was on the one hand, a quite impressive
improvement of some victims or bullies, notable either through the qualitative data about their verbal expressions and the teachers' comments, or their quantitative scores of peer nominations. On the other hand, there was some worsening, in each class, in the sense that children who were not in "risk" categories at the beginning of the year, became in June bullies or victims. Finally there was a minority of victims and bullies who kept the same characteristics, in their scores as well as in their behaviour. As is shown in the next chapter, this is quite different from what happened in control classes, observed only through the nomination scores.

In order to have a deeper guarantee of this lack of change among the experimental classes, statistical comparison among the classes was carried out (with 2-way ANOVA analysis, one factor being "class" and second factor being "time"), on peer nomination scores. No significant results were found. For bully scores $F_{(5,111)} = .24$, $p = .95$ and for victim scores $F_{(5,111)} = .53$, $p = .76$.

In my opinion, this confirms the assumption that the experimental classes can be considered as a homogeneous group, and justifies the quantitative statistical analysis carried out on them and used in the next chapter.
Chapter 6.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter provides the quantitative results of this study and explains the statistical analysis used.

Results are shown in the following way:

1. Difference between experimental and control classes (Table 6, 7 and 8).
2. Results concerning the verbal expressions in IPR interviews (Table 9 and 10).
3. Results concerning the non-verbal expressions in IPR interviews (Fig. 3).
4. Results concerning the children's behaviour in the playground before and after the intervention (Fig. 4).
5. Differences within bully and victim groups (Fig. 5a and 5b).

1. Difference between experimental and control classes after the intervention in peer nominations and the children's liking of group work.

At the beginning and at the end of the period, in all the 6 experimental classes and the 3 control classes, peer nominations about the bully/victim categories were carried out (see Tab. 6a).

To check if there were significant differences before and after the intervention both within and between the two groups of classes, a 2 way (repeated measures) ANOVA analysis was carried out for bully nominations and also for victim nominations. These analysis did not show any significant result: for bully nominations $F_{(1,171)} = 0.005, p = 0.94$, and the means in experimental classes were 12.2 (Std. Dev. = 20.9) the first time and 13.5 (Std. Dev. = 21.5) the second time. Means in control classes were 12.4 (Std. Dev. = 19.8) the first time and 13.8 (Std. Dev. = 24.2) the
second time; for victim nominations \( F_{(1,177)} = 0.14, p = 0.71 \), and the means in experimental classes were 11.4 (Std. Dev. = 15.9) the first time and 12.2 (Std. Dev. = 16.1) the second time. Means in control classes were 12.6 (Std. Dev. = 15.6) the first time and 12.9 (Std. Dev. = 17.2) the second time. Actually, exploring the data, one can notice that in both the two groups of classes (experimental and control), the main scores were very low (from 0.0 to 10.0%, revealing at maximum 2/3 received nominations), either at the beginning or at the end of the intervention, so they probably influenced a lot of the total mean scores. I wanted to examine the situation of children with higher scores of bully and victim nominations (over 33%) at the beginning of the period or at the end, in both the groups of classes. By this I mean those children who received at least 33% of nominations as bully or as victim from the classmates. This could be only in the first collecting data, or only in the second, or in both: my aim was to discover if there was a change of role from the first to the second nominations, with signs of improving or getting worse scores.

One can observe that there was a different type of change when comparing experimental to control classes, before and after the intervention in these children. For bully nominations, in experimental classes I counted 19 children with scores over 33% in the first or in the second or in both nominations: 8 of them increased their percentages of received nominations in the second collecting data (in other words, they got worse), 5 kept the same scores, and 6 decreased their score (so they improved). By contrast, in control classes, where I counted 10 children with bully scores over 33% or in the first or in the second or in both the nominations, 2 kept the same score, and 8 increased their score (they got worse), and nobody decreased the scores (see Table 6b).

By analysing these data through a 2 way ANOVA (repeated measures) and comparing the two groups of classes, before and after, it was found that there were no significant results \( F_{(1,27)} = 0.06, p = 0.81 \), but the means show the difference between the
two groups: in experimental classes 52.1 (Std. Dev. = 21.2) before and 55.5 (Std. Dev. = 19.9) after, in the control classes 44.5 (Std. Dev. = 26.8) before and 59.5 (Std. Dev. = 22.1) after.

For victim scores over 33% in experimental classes (always or in the first, or in the second, or in both the nominations) out of a total of 21 children, 2 of them kept the same percentage of received nominations, 9 decreased their scores (they improved), and 10 increased their scores (they got worse). Whereas in control classes, from a total of 11 children, 4 kept the same score, 2 decreased their score (they improved), and 5 increased their score (they got worse) (see Table 6b). Analysing these data with a 2 ways ANOVA (repeated measures), shows that the results are not significant ($F_{(1,26)} = .31, p=.58$), but once again the means show a difference between the two groups: in experimental classes from 41.1 (Std. Dev. = 17.7) to 41.9 (Std. Dev. = 17.7), and in the control classes from 34.2 (Std. Dev. = 23.2) to 41.8 (Std. Dev. = 19.4).
Tab. 6a. Number of children falling in categories of bully, victim, bully/victim, bystander or "other" (tending to be bully or victim) in experimental and control classes, before and after the intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Experimental classes</th>
<th>Control classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BULLIES</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICTIMS</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BULLY/VICTIMS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BYSTANDERS</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHERS TENDING TO BULLIES</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHERS TENDING TO VICTIMS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>117</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6b. Percentage of children with bully and victim scores over 33% in experimental and control classes, who improved, got worse or kept the same peer nominations, after the intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EXPERIMENTAL CLASSES</th>
<th>CONTROL CLASSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved in B peer nominations</td>
<td>31.6% (6 of 19 children)</td>
<td>0% (0 of 10 children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kept the same B peer nominations</td>
<td>26.3% (5 of 19 children)</td>
<td>20% (2 of 10 children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got worse in B peer nominations</td>
<td>42.1% (8 of 19 children)</td>
<td>80% (8 of 10 children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved in V peer nominations</td>
<td>42.9% (9 of 21 children)</td>
<td>18.2% (2 of 11 children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kept the same V peer nominations</td>
<td>9.5% (2 of 21 children)</td>
<td>36.4% (4 of 11 children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got worse in V peer nominations</td>
<td>47.6% (10 of 21 children)</td>
<td>45.5% (5 of 11 children)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At this point, a 2 ways (repeated measures) ANOVA analysis was carried out only on the scores of bully children, comparing experimental and control classes, before and after the intervention. This was introduced because my study was particularly focused on children nominated as bullies and victims in both the two groups of classes (so referred to those children who received over 45% of peer nominations as bullies or as victims during the first nomination). A significant result was found between experimental and control bullies (F(1,16) = 6.70, p<0.2, Eta Sqd = .23): after the intervention, the mean percentage of nominations of bully children in experimental classes decreased while, by contrast, in control classes it increased (see Table 7).
It was no possible to analyse the differences between experimental and control classes in the nominations of victim children because in the control classes just one victim was found at the beginning of the intervention. Although the mean percentage in experimental classes decreased the victim child of the control class kept almost the same percentage of peer nomination at the end of the period (see Table 7).

Table 7. Mean percentage of nominations of bully and victim children of experimental and control classes, before and after the intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BEFORE</th>
<th>AFTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experimental bullies</strong></td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n: 13)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control bullies</strong></td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>79.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n: 5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experimental victims</strong></td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n: 9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control victims</strong></td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n: 1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In considering these results one can argue that at the end of the academic year, in both groups of classes - experimental and control, there were children who kept the same percentages of bully or victim peer nominations and children who even got worse in receiving them. This was because they received more nominations as bully or as victim as compared to the beginning of the period. However, another interesting result is that in experimental classes there is a higher number of children who improved in bully or victim nominations (in other words, who received less peer nominations as bully or victims) compared to control classes, and especially among those children.
who at the beginning of the period were classified as "bullies" or "victims". It seems that in experimental classes, in some way, there were more changes over the academic year in children's perception of others compared to control classes (even if this does not necessarily mean that all the changes were towards an improvement in children's role). The cause of this could be imputed to the intervention strategies.

The questionnaire concerning the group activity was analysed next, in order to check if there was a difference in evaluating group work shown by children belonging to control classes and experimental classes.

Differences between experimental and control classes, were calculated with a one way ANOVA analysis. A significant result was found comparing the children's liking of group work scores for every bully/victim category ($F_{(4, 157)} = 9.63, p<.005$, $\eta^2 = .61$). The means are 4.0 (Std. Dev. = 1.1) for experimental classes and 4.6 (Std. Dev. = .71) for control classes. I then analysed the differences among bullies, victims and bystanders belonging to the two groups of classes. I carried out a one-way ANOVA and compared bystanders belonging to experimental classes to those of control classes, and I found a significant result ($F_{(1, 118)} = 4.19, p<.05$, $\eta^2 = .82$), showing that bystanders of control classes (means 4.6, Std. Dev. = .49) like group work more than bystanders of experimental classes (means 4.2, Std. Dev. = .89) (see Table 8). For bullies and victims I used a Mann-Whitney test, because of the small number of participants in control classes. Significant results were found nor for bullies or for victims: for bullies (12 in experimental and 4 in control classes) $U = 15$, for victims (7 in experimental and 2 in control classes) $U = 7$. Significant results were found when analysing the differences among bullies, victims and bystanders only in experimental classes (using a one-way ANOVA). Bullies were shown to like CGW very little (mean score 2.6, Std. Dev. = 1.7), compared to bystander and victim children ($F_{(3, 106)} = 9.53, p<.0001$, $\eta^2 = .45$).
Table 8. The mean scores of children's liking of group work in experimental and control classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>EXPERIMENTAL CLASSES</strong></th>
<th><strong>CONTROL CLASSES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullies</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Dev. = 1.7</td>
<td>Std. Dev. = 1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Dev. = .79</td>
<td>Std. Dev. = .71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bystanders</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Dev. = .89</td>
<td>Std. Dev. = .49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Results concerning the verbal expressions in IPR interviews.

Here the results are presented which concern the verbal expression of emotions in children's answers to the questions of IPR: "How were you feeling then?", "Did you have any feelings towards the other person(s)?", "What do you think the other felt about you?" and "How do you think the other(s) saw you at that point?". I compared the frequency of every mentioned emotion among the three categories of children (bullies, victims and bystanders), in the first and the second interview. I used internal-consistency reliability for these measures. The value of Alpha was .81 for the pre test and .73 for the post test.

I then calculated the frequency of times each child fell in the categories "interrupting others" and "been interrupted".

Analysing the equality of group variances and the normality of distribution for every emotional category (using Levene test), it was shown that for these kind of data it was appropriate to use a non parametric test. I analysed them using the Kruskal-Wallis test, separately for the first and the second interview. Mean values are shown in Table 9.
"Anger". Neither in the first nor in the second interview were there any significant differences in children's mention of anger. In the first interview Chi-square ($\chi^2$) = 1.12. In the second Chi-square ($\chi^2$) = 1.39.

"Joy". In the first interview there was a significant result concerning the expression of joy in answering IPR question. Bystanders mentioned this emotion more than bullies and victims, with Chi-square ($\chi^2$) = 5.89, $p < .05$. In the second interview there was no significant result, with Chi-square ($\chi^2$) = 3.12.

"Fear". No significant results were found either in the first or in the second interview. First interview Chi-square ($\chi^2$) = 2.05, second interview Chi-square ($\chi^2$) = 1.50.

"Expressing contempt/disgust". There was not significant differences in the first interview among children's answers concerning this emotion, with Chi-square ($\chi^2$) = 3.32. In the second interview there is a significant trend, with Chi-square ($\chi^2$) = 5.15, $p = .07$. In the second interview bullies mentioned more than other children that they felt contempt towards other persons.

"Denial". There is a significant trend towards the differences among children in denying their own emotions in the first interview. Chi-square ($\chi^2$) = 4.94, $p = .08$, with victims more likely to deny their feelings than the other two categories of children. In the second interview there is a significant difference, with Chi-square ($\chi^2$) = 6.26, $p < .05$, indicating that always victims try to deny their own emotion when answering IPR questions, and that they do this more than others.
"Empathy". There are not significant results either in the first or in the second interviews. In the first interview Chi-square $\chi^2 = 3.53$, in the second Chi-square $\chi^2 = .15$. Comparing the first interview with the second (independently from the children's categories) and using Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs test, a significant result was found: $Z = -1.9$, 2-tailed $p < .05$. This showed that during the second interview, in general, children expressed more empathy than the first one.

"Expressing interest", "Feeling shame", "Surprise", and "Sadness" were not analysed because they were mentioned only very few times in both the interviews that were to be compared (each one of them was overtly expressed around twice, and usually only in the first or in the second interview).
Table 9. Mean rank of verbal emotional expressions for bullies, victims and bystanders in the I and in the II interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anger</th>
<th>Joy</th>
<th>Fear</th>
<th>Contempt</th>
<th>Denial</th>
<th>Empathy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullies</td>
<td>I = 18.6</td>
<td>I = 14.6</td>
<td>I = 15.6</td>
<td>I = 18.0</td>
<td>I = 15.9</td>
<td>I = 15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II = 19.9</td>
<td>II = 16.7</td>
<td>II = 17.5</td>
<td>II = 20.9</td>
<td>II = 17.7</td>
<td>II = 17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims</td>
<td>I = 16.0</td>
<td>I = 11.2</td>
<td>I = 20.5</td>
<td>I = 12.0</td>
<td>I = 22.9</td>
<td>I = 14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II = 18.9</td>
<td>II = 23.3</td>
<td>II = 17.5</td>
<td>II = 17.6</td>
<td>II = 24.5</td>
<td>II = 17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bystanders</td>
<td>I = 15.1</td>
<td>I = 20.6</td>
<td>I = 15.2</td>
<td>I = 17.6</td>
<td>I = 13.8</td>
<td>I = 19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II = 15.7</td>
<td>II = 16.1</td>
<td>II = 18.8</td>
<td>II = 15.5</td>
<td>II = 14.5</td>
<td>II = 18.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Interrupting other": there is a significant result in the first interview, with Chi-square $\chi^2 = 9$, $p < .01$. Bullies interrupted others more than bystanders and victims (the latter never do it). In the second interview there is a significant trend, with Chi-square $\chi^2 = 4.9$, $p = .08$, always with bullies interrupting others more than bystanders and victims.

"Been interrupted": in the first interview there is a significant result concerning the victims who are interrupted much more than bullies and bystanders. Chi-square $\chi^2 = 11.4$, $p < .005$. In the second interview there are not significant differences among the three categories, with Chi-square $\chi^2 = 2.0$ (See Table 10).
Table 10. Percentage of bullies, victims and bystanders who fell within the categories "Interrupting others" and "Been interrupted" during the two IPR interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interrupt I interview</th>
<th>Interrupt II interview</th>
<th>Been inter. I interview</th>
<th>Been inter. II interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullies</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bystanders</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Results concerning the non verbal emotional expression in IPR interviews.

We selected a small sub-sample and our choice was dependent on the quality of the videotapes: 7 bullies, 6 victims and 2 controls.

For each child the time duration for every emotional category (on a total duration of 2 minutes of video-recording per child) was calculated and analysed comparing the three categories in the first and in the second interview and using again a Kruskal-Wallis test (because of the smallness of the sample). The reliability for these measures was an internal-consistency, Alpha being .79 for the pre-test and .68 for the post-test.

Only the significant results are described here (see Fig. 3).

Interest.

In this emotion a tendency towards a significant result was found, but only in the second interview: bystanders showed this expression more often than bullies and
victims (Chi-square $\chi^2 = 5.34$, $p = .06$). The mean scores of its duration (expressed in percentage on the total duration of facial shot) were as follows: for bystanders 100 (Std. Dev. = 0), for bullies 17.6 (Std. Dev. = 37.4) and for victims 13.3 (Std. Dev. = 30.3).

**Non coded movements.**

Significant results were found which concerned the periods of time in which children did not show any kind of facial movements in the first interview, and a tendency towards significant results was shown in the second interview. In both interviews the main difference is between victims and the other two groups of children. In the first interview Chi-square $\chi^2 = 13.02$, $p < .002$, while in the second interview Chi-square $\chi^2 = 5.14$, $p = .07$. In the first interview the mean scores of its duration was for bystanders 0 (Std. Dev. = 0), for bullies 4.2 (Std. Dev. = 9.3) and for victims 29.2 (Std. Dev. = 22.1). In the second interview, the means were for bystanders 0 (Std. Dev. = 0), for bullies 0.5 (Std. Dev. = 1.2) and for victims 15.7 (Std. Dev. = 20.2).
Fig. 3. Max and emotional expressions, in the first and in the second interview.
4. Results concerning the children's behaviour in the playground before and after the intervention.

The duration of the time each child was scored for every micro category (such as "talk to a child", or "talk to an adult", "reading", "writing", "running", "sitting", and so on) and macro categories (such as "rough and tumble", "rule play" and "free play").
"being alone" or "being with others", and so on) was also analysed. As reliability for these measures was used the internal-consistency, Alpha being .78 for the pre-test and .70 for the post-test.

Due to the high quantity of micro and macro categories, only the significant data are shown and concern the comparison between the beginning of the period of intervention and the end. This was effected by using a 2-way ANOVA analysis (first factor b/v category and second factor time) at the beginning and at the end of the intervention (see also Figure 4).

Comparison between the results before and after the intervention.

"Talk to other children": the first video-recording showed that victims were involved in conversations with others much less than bullies, and that bystanders never were. By contrast, during the second video-recording, at the end of the period of intervention, all three categories of children, but especially victims, are involved in group conversation for quite a lot of the time. Thus, there is a significant interaction between the two factors ($F(2,32) = 3.8, p< .05, \eta^2 = .11$).

"Being alone": a significant difference was found among the groups in staying alone in both situations, because victims always tended to stay alone more than the others ($F(2,32) = 8.4, p> .01, \eta^2 = .06$). But when comparing the second time with the first one, these episodes are much less frequent (significant interaction, $F(2,32) = 12.41, p< .005, \eta^2 = .5$). It is interesting to note that, at the end of the period, bullies only spent a bit of time alone.
"Stationary position": significant results were obtained which show that both before and after the intervention, victims tended to spend more time than bullies and bystanders in stationary positions ($F_{(2,32)} = 3.9, p < .05, \text{Eta Sqd} = .31$). This is significant even if these latter two groups do slightly increase the time spent in this category at the end of the period of intervention.

"Solitary play": In this case there is a significant interaction between the groups and the time scores ($F_{(2,32)} = 6.99, p < .005, \text{Eta Sqd} = .57$). Before the intervention victims spent a lot of time in this activity, whereas after the intervention they never show the need for solitary play. By contrast, bullies are sometimes involved in solitary play at the end of period.

"Football and rules play": Both in the first and second situation there is a significant difference concerning bully/victim categories: bullies played football much more than others in both the first or in the second video-recordings ($F_{(2,32)} = 4.75, p < .05, \text{Eta Sqd} = .12$).

"Rough-and-tumble": there is only a trend towards any kind of significance in this category, but it is interesting to confirm that bullies are usually more involved in this activity than bystanders and victims ($F_{(2,32)} = 2.9, p = .07$).
Fig. 4. Playground before and after the intervention. (the quantity of time is reported in percentage).

**TALKING TO OTHER CHILDREN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bullies</th>
<th>Victims</th>
<th>Bystanders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BEING ALONE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bullies</th>
<th>Victims</th>
<th>Bystanders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After</td>
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STATIONARY POSITION

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</tr>
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SOLITARY PLAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullies</td>
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<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bystanders</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOOTBALL AND RULES PLAY

ROUGH-AND-TUMBLE
5. Differences within bully and victim groups.

One of the aims of this study was to explore possible differences within the two categories of bullies and victims. I thought that data concerning naturalistic observations was the most indicative way of analysing this aspect. Thus, I considered that the "aggressive behaviour" category (see Table 4, chapter 4) was a possible index of differences within the group of bullies, and that "clumsy behaviour" (see Table 4, chapter 4) provided an index of difference within the group of victims. In particular, I argued that a bully's more or less aggressive behaviour could influence the others' perception of him/her, and thus also the nominations others were asked to give about him/her as a bully. On the other hand, for a victim being clumsy or not means having less or more opportunities to be included in group play (such as football, running after each other, playing with a skipping-roppe, a ball, and so on), and so it influences the possibility of being, for example, rejected or excluded by peers: I supposed that this aspect could also influence peer nominations about being perceived as victim.

The frequency of aggressive behaviour during the group play was calculated for each bully child and compared to their percentage of bully peer nominations (through regression analysis). This was in order to explore if there was a correlation of cause-effect between these variables, as I supposed. A positive correlation was found ($r_{11} = .7$, $p < .001$) between being aggressive and having a high score as bully (see Fig. 5a).
The frequency of "clumsy" types of behaviour were then calculated for each victim child. A regression analysis was also done to explore if there was a significant correlation of cause-effect between being clumsy and being perceived as more or less of a victim by peers (through the victim scores). A significant result was found ($r_{(n)}=.7$, $p<.02$), showing a positive correlation between the two variables (see Fig. 5b).
Quantitative analysis which concerned verbal and non verbal emotional expressions, was carried out in order to explore these subgroups of bullies and victims and used a t-test for each category. They did not reveal significant results, either for subgroups of bullies or for victims, probably due to the limited amounts of data. In emotional verbal expression, there were two categories which showed a tendency towards significant results: one for bullies and one for victims. For bullies in the category "contempt/disgust" towards others, there was a difference which concerned the frequency of the means between bullies and "aggressive bullies": the mean for bullies is 1.4 and for "aggressive bullies" 0.2, with t(9) = 1.9, p = .09. In general bullies seemed more able to talk about themselves and the others and to nominate emotions, as compared to "aggressive" bullies. I found a possible reason which would explain this result: usually, in their conversation, "aggressive" bullies tended to be more indifferent toward the others, or at least to express this kind of attitude, more often than negative emotions.
The verbal emotional category "denial" showed a tendency towards a significant difference between victims and "clumsy victims", with the means for victims 2.3, and for "clumsy" victims 1.0, $t(5)=2.2$, $p=.08$. I think that this result is clarified by going through the interviews of IPR (see chapter 6). It is quite evident that victims in general tend to deny their own emotions, but that this just concerns those children who have the highest scores and who are more overtly clumsy and socially inhibited (see for example the case of Alessia, chapter 6). They also tended (more than other victims) to avoid occasions where they talked about themselves and this by repeating the others' answers or stating their positive emotions, even if images in the video-recorder were clearly indicating a difficult situation for them. In those cases, my impression, was that they were just dissimulating their own emotions, rather than denying them.
Chapter 7.

SOME EXAMPLES OF THE SESSIONS OF IPR.

Introduction.
In qualitative analysis there are many different methodologies, such as grounded theory, discourse analysis, etc. (Strauss, 1987; Colin, 1993; Miles & Huberman, 1983). As stated by Strauss (1987): "Grounded theory is a detailed grounding by systematically and intensively analysing data, often sentence by sentence, or phrase by phrase of the field note, interview, or other document'; by 'constant comparison' data are extensively collected and coded........". The focus of this analysis is to organizing the many ideas which have emerged from an examination of the data.

The major differences between grounded theory and other qualitative analysis modes, is not in the relative unpredictability of project phases, but in the differences per stage in the combinations and permutations of the operations (theoretical sampling, comparative analysis, and so forth).

In this study, the use of grounded theory or other structured qualitative methods would be quite difficult, mostly because the data are children's verbal sentences, and very often they were not able to express their ideas or feelings very clearly.

The aim of this chapter is to use quoted examples to explore, the group and the individual dynamics which occurred during the two sessions of IPR. This offers the opportunity to deeply examine some aspects which emerged from the quantitative results presented in chapter 5. By reading specific passages of conversations during the first and the second interviews it is possible to clarify the differences among bullies, victims and bystanders in verbal expressions and also to highlight the changes between the first and the second interview.
For every quoted example a description about the children's bully/victim category and age is given. The quotations are divided in two thematic sections:

i). Spontaneous conversation among children and development of discussion inside the group through IPR questions.

In both the interviews, there was a part of the session in which children spontaneously talked among themselves, or talked about other episodes besides the video-recorded one, or commented and talked about the specific activity they were watching. During the first session this happened much less than the second time, probably because children were less confident in the IPR itself. But a very impressive result that I want to comment on in this section is the completely different quality of the content of their spontaneous comments between the first and the second interview. In the first interview their sentences were usually about what they liked or disliked about the situation, and only in two or three cases it was able to instigate a very deep and stimulating group exploration of their behaviour and attitudes. In the second interview, the spontaneous comments were almost always focused on remarks directed towards the bullies and victims' improvements in their social relationships.

Of course, during their spontaneous conversation, I sometimes tried to use IPR questions to help groups in exploring deeper levels, especially the first time, and it is remarkable that the second time they needed my intervention much less.

I think that this part of the study is very useful in understanding how the process of IPR works and to identify the ways in which it helps the stimulation of empathy and awareness of the problem of bullying. Through comparison with the first interview, it also shows how children, after a long period of intervention, are able to approach this methodology differently, becoming more independent from the inquirer and more aware of the ways to emotionally communicate amongst themselves.
ii). IPR and the possibility of reflecting on one's own and the feelings and emotions of others.

During the first interview it is possible to use IPR to observe the awakening of self awareness in the areas of emotions and attention to the feelings; in all children, however, there is still a clear need for guidance in this task. But the second time, their capacity to spontaneously describe a different variety of emotions is evident. They are now able to describe positive as well as negative emotions (such as joy, but also anger and sadness) in themselves and others and also to explore and reflect on them.

This section is specifically dedicated to the consideration of how children actually reflected on their own and others' emotions, and compares the consideration of the first and the second interviews through quotations about this subject.

Empathy is much more strongly developed in all children in the second interview, while other emotions do not appear - such as fear of others or contempt.

The final part describes 4 specific case studies. In 2 of these (one bully and one victim) there was an evident improvement over the period of intervention and this was also confirmed by the peer nomination scores and the data about their free behaviour during playtime. In the other 2 (again one bully and one victim) the improvement was not so evident or even represented a stationary situation which, in this case was confirmed by the quantitative data. For each of them I quote the most significant passages which occurred during their first and second interviews and also qualitatively explore their verbal expressions and their answers to myself and also to classmates in the two given situations. I have of course changed the children's names.

1. A qualitative analysis of the two sessions of IPR.

i). Spontaneous conversation among children and the development of discussion inside the group through IPR questions

*First interview*
During the first interview children talked spontaneously much less than the second time, and in particularly victims did this much less than the other children.

This means that not only they were much less spontaneously active participants in the free conversation of their group, but also that they often refused to answer IPR questions and, even if provoked, they avoided talking with group members.

Very often, mostly in the first interview, they pretended to not remember their feelings, or they denied occurrence of a negative situation, even if that was evident from the video-recording. For victims it was also quite difficult to express themselves because the others (especially bullies) used to interrupt them, as was shown in the quantitative results. This happened in both the interviews, even if a bit less in the second. Moreover, mostly in the first interview victims looked almost emotionally inexpressive during the recalling of their shared activities as compared to the others who were by contrast, excited, interested and happy.

Frequently, bystanders and bullies asked to stop the video in order to comment on the activity which they were watching, and usually, bystanders’ comments were positive in the sense that they appreciated what was going on.

Sometimes they also asked to stop the video to introduce some negative comments about others, especially about victims.

For example, concerning a passage of the video where there was a victim who was too shy to talk a bully says:

Bully: “now we have to wait half an hour”
LB: “why do you say that we have to wait half an hour?”
Bully: “well, because we had to force her to talk and she didn’t want to. We had to ask her some questions!”
LB: (to the victim) “how did you feel at that moment?”
Bully: “Upset, she was scared of talking in front of us, she is so shy!”
This example also clearly identifies the typical bullying behaviour when a victim has to talk: they neither give them the time to start the answer because they precede them or they interrupt them when they are talking.

Over the process of IPR, however, there was always an opportunity for all children to express their own emotions and thoughts concerning a common activity and it was also useful to children of some classes (especially older children, 10-11 years old) to spontaneously talk to each other and to face subjects that usually were avoided.

The following example is about a group of 11 year old children that directly tackled one of two bully girls (the other was not present) about the problem of her usual aggressive behaviour to the victim of the class:

Bystander 1 asks to stop the video.
LB: "Tell me."
Bys1: "No, I would like to ask something of Laura (the bully). Why sometimes you have a flash..."
Laura: "In my brain..." - all laugh-
Bys1: "And you start to bully someone?"
Laura (2 sec. silent): "Well, because we are bored by ourselves, and we start to........to tease."
Bys1: "But I don’t understand what it is for...."
Laura: "I have simply answered you"
Bys2: "Laura, but...do you make children who are more alone the object of your attacks, or....who do you attack?"
Laura: "...well, nobody....."
Bys1: "Serenella...."
Laura: "Yes, for example, we have been teasing her since the first year"
Bys2: "I know"
Laura: "By now it is a habit..."
Bys1: "But do you do it out of spite?"
Laura: "Well, she is always with the teacher, she follows her, and then she....well we started to tease her, I don’t know, we enjoy to tease her"
Bys1: "Well, answer me, is it because you feel strong after that?"
Laura: "No, it is just to tease her"
After that session their teacher told me that the class asked to talk about this subject over the following weeks during the group discussion time and this situation improved a lot.

In another group (again all 11 years old and in the first interview), bystanders tackled the problem of the victim of their class, helping her to analyse why she is bullied and how she could solve this problem. As inquirer, I tried to help them in exploring this subject by asking IPR questions. I also used IPR to smooth over some critical moments in which the victim became too uncomfortable. In this next passage the development in bystanders' empathy towards the victim during the interview itself is clear. From a simple description about her situation and their own usual indifference towards these episodes, they arrive to a deep exploration of which are her feelings and emotions and what could be done to help her. The outcomes of this discussion are fascinating. Moreover, they confirm my initial hypothesis about the lack of expression of victims in their emotional reactions, because the other children spontaneously observe that this is a typical victim's answer to provocations.

Bystander 1: "For example, Matilde. She never spoke."
Bystander 2: "Yes, but she is always like that!"
Bystander 3: "Yes, she doesn't generally talk a lot. She should push herself forward."
LB: "How did you feel in that moment, Matilde?"
Matilde: "Well...a bit scared...because...."
Bystander 1: "...of being teased in case you made a mistake......"
Matilde is silent, showing "blank face".
LB: "Is it that?"
Matilde: "No, also because,...because...there is......because....(she stammers)....I was scared to be video-recorded."
LB: "I see. So the video-camera made you feel uneasy".
Bystander 1: "Actually she is also usually like that in the classroom!"
LB: "Do you recall any physical sensation?"
Matilde: "Even now I do".
LB: "Now? And where do you feel that sensation?"
Bystander 1: "In your heart?"
Matilde: "No, everywhere."
LB: "Everywhere, I see."
Bystanders commented that they realized that Matilde was in this state and they started to tell me about the usual bullying episodes that Matilde suffers (recounting facts independent from the specific one on the videotape).

LB: "But, talking about the video-recorded activity we are watching, did you have any feelings towards Matilde?"
Bystander 3: "Well, I don't know, for example, I thought that she was a bit sad...because she wasn't able to express herself....Actually, I didn't care a lot."

Now all the bystanders try to find the causes of that usual silence. Matilde, in the meantime, does not show any facial expression and she gazes at the floor.

Bystander 4: "Well, she is so shy..."
Bystander 2: "In my opinion Matilde is very reserved, she is scared to say her ideas."
All the others agree.
Bystander 2: "And I felt touched by her situation: it seemed that for her none of us was there, that she believed herself to be alone, abandoned".

The others agree, Matilde is silent, or she only says "I was scared".

Bystanders encourage her, saying that each one of them was scared of talking in front of other people, and that there are no right or wrong sentences.

They comment that someone in their class is a bully and one of them says:

"Don't tease me, but this reminds me of mafia: there are bullies, and there are victims, and us, who never intervene".

Then the conversation came back to Matilde, and they commented:

Bystander 1: "When they bully her, she doesn't react!"
Matilde:"Actually, when they bully me...... I would like to do something!" (she smiles).
Bystander 2: "She keeps her feeling inside, she doesn't say anything."
Bystander 3: "She doesn't even cry!"
Bystander 4: "That's incredible! I always cry!"
Bystander 3: "She should do it. She could give vent to her anger. I would advise
Matilde to become friends with 3 or 4 girls."
Bystander 4: "To push herself forward".
Bystander 3: "And to do the same things she is used to receiving, against bullies,
when they are alone, so they could know what being alone means."
Matilde: "I usually go to the teacher, but she never says anything."

This extract illustrates the powerful impact of IPR: awakening of awareness,
responsibility and empathy in bystanders, through to the analysis of the most important
points of the bullying phenomenon (including the usual bystanders' indifference), and
the final support to the victim, by considering different solutions to her situation.
Moreover, considering that the victim was absolutely inexpressive during the video-
recalling and silent at the beginning of the conversation, it is amazing to observe two
simultaneous developments. While bystanders were exploring her feelings and showing
more and more interest and empathy towards her, at the same time she became able to
express her emotions - confessing that she was scared, what she would like to do and
what in fact she actually does when she is attacked. Furthermore, she was the only
victim who overtly named her emotions as fearful so many times in the first interview.
I suppose that it was because the rest of the group were showing understanding
towards her.

Second interview
The second interview was carried out in all the groups by recalling videotapes
recorded during the playtime.

During this session, the spontaneous comments or questions among children were
more evident quantitatively. Children generally talked much more. This is obviously
also due to the deeper confidence in me that they had the second time and to the IPR
itself, but it was evident however, that they were not just simply more relaxed
together, but in particular were more responsible and able to talk spontaneously
(without the help of specific IPR questions) about private and personal subjects, such as feelings, emotions, attitudes.

The different quality of their content is also relevant. The case in which, for instance, bystanders recognized that a bully or a victim's improvement was a frequent occurrence. Specifically, 5 bullies and 5 victims were declared by group mates as improved in their behaviour, and in fact everyone of them had a strong decrease in their second 'bully' and 'victim' scores according to peer nominations. I consider this to be a very important result and probably, after the others' comments it is possible that the same bullies and victims also improved their self-esteem.

Some examples:

Fabio (a bully, 9 years old): "I improved a bit...."
Bystander 1: "Yes, he improved in maths!"
LB: "Yes? I am very glad!"
Bystander 2: "But also his behaviour has improved a lot!"

A group of children 8 years old:

Bystander: "I don't like it when Alessio bullies others....for example, Denis, now doesn't do it any more!"
Denis: "I am more calm, now"
LB: "Why are you more calm, now, what happened?"
Denis: "Well, because the others once made me feel bad, they called me names, and then I....I stopped bullying others."

A group of children 9 years old:

Bystander 1: "Sara (a victim) is a shy girl...she would like to play with us, but she is ashamed to ask us, so we have to ask her, and sometimes she says no....I think that she.....she would like to say yes, but she says no because she is shy."
Bystander 2: "With.....but with some children she learned to be closer, more open...."
Bystander 1: " Maybe because now she is more confident."
Bystander 2: "Yes, do you remember her some months ago? She always was alone, she never used to play with us as she was too shy, but now....she is more...open"
LB: "So, Sara, how did you feel today in that situation, when you were playing alone and not with your classmates?"
Sara: "um.....well, I didn't want to play, I mean, to play with them, and so...I played alone"
LB: "I see. You did not want to play with the others."
Sara: "No."
Bystander 2: "Maybe she wanted to just stay alone to think."
Bystander 1: "To think?!"
Bystander 2: "Sure! Sometimes you stay alone just because you need to think!"

Finally, a group (of 11 year olds), who were talking about an abandoned dog that was often in the garden during that period of playtime and that other children kicked. Their comments concerned the victim of their group:

Bystander 1: "In my opinion, Simone spent a lot of time with that dog and it seemed to me that it was his own dog, because it was clear that he loves him."
Bystander 2: "I liked it when Simone played with the dog."
LB: "Why?"
Bystander 2: "Because in that way the dog wasn't alone, and he was happy."
Bystander 1: "I liked that, and I would also like to say that sometimes Simone provokes children, but he is good."
Simone: "Yes, I am good."
All laugh.

ii). IPR and the possibility of reflecting on one's own and the feelings and emotions of others.

First interview
During the first interview, the children's conversations were never overtly aggressive and questions of IPR provided me with the possibility of smoothing over discussions that could degenerate into unpleasant and uncomfortable arguments for someone, or of helping children to explore very serious and delicate subjects without hurting anyone.
For instance, after a passage in which bystanders and a bully (8 years old) teased a victim because she was too ashamed to talk during the common activity, I asked the bully:

LB: “And how did you feel in that situation?”
Bully: “Oh, I didn't want to participate in that task!”
LB: “Why?”
Bully: “I was too embarrassed, I felt like I was dumb”

From that moment, every one else started to say that the task that they did in the activity was embarrassing for them too, because they had to talk in front of the others and say their own ideas. At that point they realized and remarked upon the fact that the victim was not the only one to be in that situation.

Victims however, demonstrated a deeper awareness about their own behaviour in the first interview, as compared to the others, and also the problem of their passive behaviour in the group activities was often spontaneously remarked on by themselves. When I asked children to say something about what they did like, or did not like, about the episode they were watching, victims typically answered that they did not like their own behaviour. This was usually because they were too shy, and they remarked on the fact that they should speak much more and should be more active in the common tasks, and so on.

Here are some typical examples of their conversation:

LB: “How had you wanted to behave in that situation?”
Victim (9 years old): “Talk.”
LB: “What do you mean?”
Victim: “Well, I almost didn't speak.”
LB: “So you wanted to talk more. And why didn’t you speak?”
Victim: “Because I didn’t know......what to say”

Another:
Victim (10 years old): “I wanted to talk, but they interrupted me.”
LB: “And did you want to tell them something?”
Victim: “No, because....I don’t know.”
LB: “Are you saying that you didn’t want to tell them anything?”
Victim: “I was a bit ashamed”
LB: “You were ashamed to talk to them.”
Victim: “Yes”
LB: “And which thoughts were going through your mind in that moment?”
Victim: “But....I wanted to tell them....well....’stop it, I would like to talk!””

By contrast, bullies and bystanders analyse their own behaviour much less than victims, but when bullies did do this, the result was usually that they would like to be more aggressive than they in fact were:

Bully (10 years old): ”If I had known that they spoiled my scene during role-play, I would do the same in theirs!”

Usually, in the first interview, when some child analysed their own feelings or behaviour during the activity, the others (without distinction of bully/victim category) commented that they didn’t realize it, and that they just felt towards that person:

“normal”
“I didn’t feel anything”
“I don’t remember. I didn’t think anything of him/her.”

However, these are also typical answers that were used especially by victims when they wanted to avoid some particular discussion about their own feelings.

Second interview

In the second interview, the situation was different in the following way:

Children generally showed more empathy (not only bystanders but also bullies) towards the others. They also spontaneously analysed their own behaviour and feelings
towards other children, often realizing that they could be even more supportive. The second interview shows an extended part of the conversation which focused on the reflection of these subjects, as compared to the first interview. As they were able to explore emotions in general, there is also an increased analysis of negative emotions, such as anger or sadness, which was shown especially by bullies. This does not mean that they felt more anger than in the first interview, but that they were able to reflect on this and to discuss it with others, as well as talking about the other positive emotions. More than others bullies tended to get angry in group episodes however, and that is why they talked more about this emotion. I consider it to be an improvement that at the end of the period of intervention they learned to analyse it with peers.

Victims, even if still showing an increased tendency to dissimulate their own emotions (especially the most serious cases, see Alessia), or to deny them, were more used to talking in front of the others, generally, as well as about these personal subjects, and were also more involved in the group. That is why they were more often able to overtly express their own emotions and to discuss them with others.

Examples of empathy:

LB (to a bully, 9 years old):" Did you realize that Lorenzo - a bystander- was angry in that situation?"
Bully: "I did"
LB: "You did. And because of what?"
Bully: "He was sitting on the step, and he was waiting."
LB: "What did you think at that moment?"
Bully: "I felt sorry, because he was angry...."

A group of children 9 years old:

LB: "Did you realize that he - a bystander- was sad?"
All: "Yes"
LB:"How did you realize that?"
Bystander 1:" I realized through his voice and the way he spoke."
Bystander 2:"Yes, and also the way he was sitting, his posture."
LB:" How did you feel at that moment?"
Bystander 2:" I felt evil towards him".

A group of children 8 years old:

Bystander 1:" I didn't like how they made fun of me. I didn't like that joke."  
LB (to the bully): "Did you have any feelings towards him?"
Bully:"I realized he was sad, he didn't like the joke."  
LB:"And how did you feel?"
Bully:"Well, bad...but we just wanted to have fun! I know that it's wrong, but sometimes can happen, it's not bad!"

A group of children 9 years old, talking about a victim girl:

Bystander 1: "Today, anyway, we were a bit bad to her because we didn't think that.....well...where she was.....we didn't think to call her, like the other days...."  
Bystander 2: " I have to confess that, in my opinion...in my opinion, ....well I am very sorry for her, because...we didn't asked her to play with us, and so she had to manage with someone else, with other children!"

Examples about joy:

Bully (8 years old): "I enjoyed things a lot, I was happy. The game was very amusing and the other children were funny. I laughed a lot. It was wonderful, because each one of us was happy."
LB: (to a bystander)" And you?"
Bystander:" So was I, happy."

LB:"What thoughts were going through your mind at that time?"
Victim (8 years old):" I was well. I thought I was happy playing with them."
LB:"How do you think the others saw you at that point?"
Victim:" Happy."
Bystander 1: "I liked our fight...."
Bystander 2: "I think that fights shouldn't happen, we always should get on well with one each other."
Bystander 1: "On the other hand, sometimes, they are useful, in my opinion they are positive."
Bystander 3: "Yes, you can clarify some problem, if you don't understand it, listening to the others' ideas."

LB: "What got in the way?"
Bystander 1: "I....when we were playing, you know, and we were playing together, it seemed to me that....well, that we all were friends...."
LB: "I see...."
Bystander 1: "Because now we are all....."
Bystander 2: "Friends."
Bystander 3: "Close to each other."

There are also examples of reflections on negative emotions and bullies are those who mostly said they felt anger and discussed it:

Bully(9 years old): "I fell down, and I was very angry...."
Bystander: "He was a devil...."
Bully: "Yes, because when I fall down -during football play-, I don't know why, I become mad...."
LB: "Do you remember any physical sensation?"
Bully: "In my brain.....no, in my feet, but when I am very very angry, in all my body."

Bystander (boy, 9 years old): "Lucia, can I say one thing?"
LB: "Of course, you can."
Bystander: "When Lara (bystander girl) was crying, I felt a sensation of....revenge. I don't like her."
Bully: "Yes, me too, I wanted to hit her, I was very angry with her."
A group of children 9 years old:

Bully: "I wasn't able to stand them any more! Everytime it is the same situation. They waste a lot of time deciding what to do, and when we start to play or to work, time is over!! So, I decided to leave the group at that moment."
Bystander: "I realized that, I thought that he didn't want to play with us any more, and I was right."
LB (to the bully): "Did you realize that he saw you, and that he realized your intentions?"
Bully: "No, actually, to me they seemed so interested by the game that I thought they didn't care about anything else."

Later, in the same group, I asked control children:

LB: "Anything you did not like?"
Bystander: "When Massimo -the bully- went away."
Massimo: "I didn't like it either, but I preferred to go than to waste playtime in discussing!"

Also interesting is a case which involved a group in which there was a bully girl and a victim girl. The victim (52.9 victim score at the beginning of the period, and 61.1 at the end) was often bullied by the whole group. The bully girl improved in her bully score, from 47.0 to 16.7, at the end of the period of intervention. Even though the victim kept her role throughout the period, she certainly became more assertive and all the group analysed her new capacity to express her emotions:

Bully (to the victim): "I allowed her to play with us. She was a parrot. And parrots stay in their cage. But, she went around! She had to stay in her cage!"
Victim: "But I fly!"
Bully: "Of course, but you don't have real wings!"
Victim: "Well, of course not!"
Bully: "Well, OK.....but she talked like a person! We got angry, and....(to the victim) tell her (LB) what you said!"
Victim is silent.
Bully: "You said: 'it is unfair'!!!"
Victim: "Yes, I said that, and I was angry! Why always me? I wanted to play like a person, like you! And I want you to say what you think about me to my face!!"
Bystanders agreed and described forms of indirect aggression that girls of their class are used to experiencing. From that point onwards they started to analyse the victim's reactions, considering how she had improved in now being able to react to provocations. Of course, the fact that the group proposed such a frustrating role to her in their role-play, is still proof that she was not completely integrated in her class. However, she was one of the victims who showed a "blank face" (64.7% of the total duration of her video-recording) for almost all the first interview and she was not able to answer IPR questions. In this second interview, she was much more assertive and responsive, she was able to face her group mates by gazing at them and her facial expression during the quoted passage was definitively one of anger. Out of the total time she spent watching herself on the video, she spent only 27.9% with a "blank face".

2. Four specific cases.
2.1. A bully and a victim who improved over a period of intervention.
In this paragraph I present the cases of Luisa, a bully girl, and Marco, a victim boy, who both improved during the academic year and showed positive results in quantitative as well as qualitative data.

Each one of them, in fact, had at the end of the period of intervention, a peer nomination score of bully and victim that categorized them as respectively "other" and "control" children, and this improvement is also confirmed by the playground videotapes in which both children showed the capacity to play positive social games with groups of classmates and of using cooperative strategies and developing friendships with new children.

Both children had at the beginning of the period a bully/victim score that was not very high, so they belonged to the categories that I simply called 'bully' and 'victim'
and not those of 'aggressive bully' and 'clumsy victim'. I think that this is an important variable, because for them the intervention through the curriculum plus IPR, was really effective. While the next cases, belonging to more serious categories of bully and victim, were not much improved by the simple intervention at school.

2.1.1. Luisa.

Luisa is 9 years old and she belongs to one of the classes that carried out mostly group discussion and role-play. Her bully score at the beginning of the period of intervention was 47.4, so she was a bully with a not very high score. At the end of the period her bully score was 41.2 and so she became an 'other'.

Analysing her playground data video-recorded at the beginning of the period of intervention, it is evident that she used to spend playtime playing football with boys, or alone sitting and watching the others playing football. During the first part of the year she never spent time with other girls. Her teacher told me that she did not have friends and that she was considered a bully by classmates because she was likely to fight with them for any reason, especially with another girl in the class, usually showing a total lack of empathy to the others.

During the first interview of IPR she demonstrated very negative emotions towards this girl who she used to fight with: in fact, during the video-recorded activity they had an argument and the teacher had to intervene to solve that problematic moment. The other girl was crying because of Luisa's aggressiveness, whereas Luisa was very provocative and showed indifference and even contempt towards the other child. Recalling that passage, Luisa showed a non verbal expression of 'interest' (14.1%), 'interest+joy' (62.6%) and 'disgust' (23.2%). She did not talk to the rest of the group, even when the classmates commented on the fight during the interview and
tried to involve her in discussion. She also tried to avoid my questions, justifying herself and accusing the other girl of having provoked her.

Luisa: "While I was talking she interrupted me, saying: 'it's not true, it's not true', so...."  
LB: "How did you feel in that moment?"  
Luisa: "Well, bad, but...."  
LB: "How were you feeling then?"  
Luisa: "I didn't say it out of malice, because....then we discussed again, and ......with the teacher.....and she cried and the teacher said....."  
LB: "Pardon me, who was crying?"  
Luisa: "Gemma -the girl-, and then the teacher said: 'Gemma, Luisa didn't do it out of malice, she is not angry with you'. Someone asked me some questions (during the activity), and I simply answered."  
LB: "Anything you were not saying?"  
Luisa: "......because, then, she was not alone, she was with a friend of hers!"  
LB: "Were there any pictures going through your mind?"  
Luisa: "No".  
LB: "Has this happened to you before?"  
Luisa (12" silent).  
Bystander: "Yes; a lot of times!"  
LB: "A lot of times?"  
Luisa: "Yes, but not always with her."  
Bystander: "Yes, you fight also with Daniele."  
LB: "Are these the persons with whom you most often fight, Luisa?"  
Luisa: "No, a little, .......just sometimes."  
Bystander: "She fights with Gemma even in class".  
Luisa: "No, she provokes me, she provokes me, I wasn't angry with her, but it is unpleasant, I was only answering the questions, and she started to say: 'it's not true, it's not true!...."  

During the second interview, Luisa had changed. Her teacher had already told me that she had improved a lot in social skills and that she had become friends with a group of girl classmates. During playtime they used to stay together, talking or playing some rule-play or role-play. The recalling of the videotape during the second IPR was just about a passage in which they were all together, talking. While Luisa was watching her video she always showed an expression of 'interest+joy' (100%).
During the interview children said that one of them (a control) was sad in that passage, for a personal reason. The others were very shocked about that and they said they had tried to be supportive to her. Luisa demonstrated a strong sense of empathy towards her:

Luisa: "I saw her sad"
L.B.: "What thoughts were going through your mind at that time?"
Luisa: "She told me she was in trouble".
L.B.: "How had you wanted to behave in that situation?"
Luisa: "Exactly, I just said that we could play tig together to help her".
L.B.: "Did you have any feelings towards her?"
Luisa: "I was sorry for her, well, sorry to see her so sad".
L.B.: "If that sensation had a voice, what would it say?"
Luisa: "...Nothing happened. I wanted to help her and maybe we did. I tried to change the subject so that she wouldn't think of that any more."
L.B.: "I see, so instead of discussing that with her, you preferred to distract her."
Luisa: "Yes, because otherwise it could be even worse, I think."

The other bystander girls commented the episode and each one talked of her strategy to help the sad child. When I asked what they liked about that situation, Luisa answered:
"We were close one another"

Bystander 1: "In my opinion, friendship made us stay together".
L.B.: "Did you feel that?"
All: "Yes."

At this point one of them, a bystander girl Sara, was maybe touched by the situation and started to cry while I was still asking children about their feelings. Luisa, who was sitting near her, immediately started to dry her tears and was very touched too, which made me realize what was going on:

L.B.: "Is there something wrong?"
Luisa embraces Sara, covering her face with her own hands, while Sara is sobbing.
Bystander 1: "She is upset".
L.B.: "Is it just because of this?"
Luisa: "Yes"
L.B.: "Is there some other problem, Sara? Is it only about what you have said?"
Sara nods, while Luisa is still embracing her.
Bystander 2: "Yes, when there are some fights, she always intervenes."
LB: "But you are saying wonderful things, you should smile instead Sara, shouldn't you?"
Sara laughs, Luisa is visibly touched by the situation.

When Luisa sees Sara smiling, her posture relaxes a lot and she stops to embrace her, but her facial expression is still quite tense. Actually, she was the only one in the group who was really supportive to that girl, because the others seemed to be very embarrassed by my presence and did not have any physical contact to her.
By contrast, Luisa showed a very strong empathy, either when talking about the video-recording activity, or during the process of IPR itself.

2.1.2. Marco.
Marco is 10 years old, and his victim score at the beginning of the intervention was 47.0. Thus, he was not a victim with a high score. He is very short and skinny, and his classmates often joke about his physical characteristics.

The first video-recording of his behaviour during the playtime showed that he was not accepted in football play by his classmates, and so he used to spend that time with girl, or just sitting and watching the others playing football.

During the first interview he was sitting between two bullies who were quite unpleasant to him (while he was answering IPR questions), for example sticking their chewing-gum in his hair, laughing at what he was saying, and so on.

They immediately started to joke about him after the first passage of the tape, and in order to defend himself, Marco tried to deny what they were saying, the two bullies asked to stop the tape and said:

Bully1: "Marco here was saying...."  
Marco: "No...."  
Bully1: "...that Nicola -the other bully- takes advantage of him because...."  
Marco: "No, no."  
Bully1: "Because he is the smallest..."
Marco: "No, I was talking about my birthday...."
Bully 1: "Yes, when it was your birthday, and you were green, weren't you? because you were sick!(all laugh) What were you saying?"
Marco: "I don't remember"
Bully 1: "He said that we took advantage of this to play with his game!"
Nicola (bully 2): "Actually, I even let you play too much..."
Marco: "Well ok, now we can start to watch the tape again!"
LB: "Do you want to continue to watch the tape?"
All: "Yes."

While he was watching the tape, he showed an expression of 'interest' for 31% of time, 'interest+joy' for 31%, but he showed a 'frozen' expression for 38% of time, in which it was not possible to code any facial movement.

During the following discussion about the tape, Marco adopted different strategies, he talked about the others, participated in the conversation, pretended that he did not realize what the two bullies were doing to him and commented that other children were not active participants in the common activity which was being video-recorded:

Marco: "I didn't like it that Irene didn't talk"
LB: "Pardon me?"
Marco: "That Irene didn't talk"
LB: "You didn't like it. Anything you wanted to happen?"
Bully 1: "Oh, God...."
Marco is silent.
LB: "Would you like to change something about yesterday?"
Bully 1: "Come on, say something definite!"
Marco: "I wouldn't change anything"
LB: "How did you want to behave in that situation?"
Marco: "Just a bit...."
LB: "Pardon me?"
Marco is silent for 3".
Bystander: "When you...."
Bully 1: "He would like to change what I said!"
Marco: "No, because....I was a bit embarrassed, so I talked just a little too."
LB: "I see."
For the rest of the interview Marco was silent, while the others were involved in their discussion and the two bullies continued to make unpleasant jokes about him.

Over the period of intervention he changed a lot and his classmates' behaviour towards him changed too. In fact, at the end of that period the video-recording of the playground showed him playing football with the others, completely accepted and actively participating, and his victim score decreased to 27.8, so that he was definitely in the 'control' category.

Moreover, also during the second interview of IPR, his behaviour had changed and he seemed much more confident with his classmates. While he watched the video, he always showed an expression of 'interest+joy' (100%). He participated in the common discussion, talking about also other episodes besides that one on the videotape. He explained the relationship between his class and the others, and when I asked if there was something that got in the way, he answered:

Marco: "During football, Ernesto kicked me and it was very painful."
LB: "How had you wanted to behave?"
Nicola: "He wanted to kick him back!"
Marco: "No, (he laughs) I knew that it was a mistake, it was just painful."

The others started to comment on the fact that now Marco plays football with them and joked about the way he used to make a save (because he is short). They all laugh, including Marco and he answers:

Marco: "It's not true! It's not true!"
Nicola (seriously): "Well anyway, now he has become quite good at playing!"
Bystander 1: "Yes, now it is fine that we all play, in fact this morning when we were playing it seemed to me that...we were playing together, and we...ran, we passed the ball to each other, well, we were all friends!"
LB: "I see."
Bystander 2: "Because, yes, because now we are all..."
Bully 1: "Friends"
Bystander 1: "Close"
Bystander 2: "Close".

2.2. A bully and a victim who were not improved over the period of intervention.

2.2.1 Paolo.

8 year old Paolo is a case of a bully child with a very high bully score at the beginning of the period of intervention (70.0) and that was unchanged at the end of the period (70.0). That's why he belongs to the category that I defined as 'aggressive bully'. I present his case because in my opinion it is typical of a child with probably very high risk conditions at home with in his family (his teacher informed me about that) and with an emotional disorder (high aggressiveness and complete lack of empathy). Thus, probably the intervention at school was not enough to change him or to improve his relationship with others.

Paolo's video-recording during playtime showed that he only used to spend it playing football with his classmates at the beginning and at the end of the period. His style of play is indicative of very aggressive behaviour, he very often violated the rules of the play, and he was very rude and violent with the other children during the play.

During the first IPR interview when recalling a group discussion in the classroom, Paolo showed 'interest' for 52% of the time, 'joy' for 44%, and 'anger' for 4%. Some control children asked to stop the video because there was an important passage for them - their teacher asked them to think of a bully in their class:

Paolo:"I thought of a lot of names..."
Bystander 1: "I thought that Paolo is a bully."
LB:"You thought Paolo is a bully."
Bystander 1:"Not a lot, but a bit yes."
Bystander 2:"I thought of Paolo."
LB:" Paolo, what did you think at that moment?"
Paolo:"I thought of Sara - a victim girl-".
Sara:" I knew it! I knew it!"
LB:"You thought that Sara is a bully."
Paolo: "She always meddles!"
Bystander 3: "I thought of Paolo."
Bystander 1: "So did I."
LB: "Paolo, did you realize that?"
Paolo: "No, I didn't look at them."

Although his classmates confessed that they all thought about him as a bully, Paolo was very relaxed, indifferent to this fact and he enjoyed the possibility of watching himself - it seemed that he did not realize what the others were saying about him. He explained that in their class there are a lot of bullies, both boys and girls, and he described their behaviour, saying that they were aggressive, violent and that they very often made others cry. At the end of the interview, he said that he had enjoyed that group discussion and that he didn't want to change anything that had happened during that period.

At the end of the intervention, the playground video-recordings show that Paolo still played football with his classmates and that his behaviour was still quite aggressive and indifferent. Particularly, there was a passage of the tape that the group watched during the second interview of IPR in which during the play, another bully child of that class trips over a girl, and he has a bad fall on the ground. As this child was crying others immediately approached to help him, but Paolo was quite far from the group and he merely looked at them for a few seconds and then turned and started to play with the ball again by himself.

There was the opportunity to analyse and explore this passage because the children asked to stop the video in order to comment on that moment. While they were watching it Paolo showed 'interest+joy' for 19.2% of the time but simply 'joy' for the 80.8%, despite the passage containing some quite dramatic material.

LB: "Paolo, did you have any feelings towards him - the other bully who was crying?"
Paolo: "Anger"
LB: "Do you recall any physical sensation?"
Paolo: "In my head".
LB: "What thoughts were going through your mind at the time?"
Paolo: "Of continuing the game."
LB: "You wanted to continue to play. Did you say that?"
Paolo: "Yes, I said: 'I'll continue to play'".
LB: "What do you think he felt towards you?"
Paolo: "Nothing."
LB: "Nothing."

The conversation went on, and later I asked Paolo if there was something that he particularly liked about that moment:

Paolo: "When he fell down."
LB: "Did you like that?"
Paolo (laughing): "It was funny."

It is striking that he was absolutely indifferent towards the other's suffering, even when the discussion was overtly analysing that aspect. So, not only did he completely lack empathy during the episode (by contrast, he even said that he was angry which was probably because that child interrupted the game by falling down and catching the others' attention), but even during the act of recalling it, while all the other children were exploring their empathic feelings towards the child he was not affected. The impression given was that he honestly found that situation very funny. I never had any indication that he was provoking our reaction saying the opposite of what he was supposed to do. The MAX coding confirmed that fact; he was absolutely happy during that recalling time, and this makes me think that in a case like this there really are serious emotional disorders that an anti-bullying intervention at school cannot help.
2.2.2. Alessia.

Finally, I present the case of a 10 year old victim girl who received 68.4% of peer nominations as victim at the beginning of the period of intervention and 78.9% at the end. She was a shy, extremely clumsy child who used to spend her playtime alone, sitting and watching the others, or talking to her teacher. This behaviour was more evident at the beginning of the period of intervention, in fact in the video-recorded passages at the end of the period she also spent time with other girls, playing with a ball, and talking. But even if she was present in a group of peers she actually seemed neglected and ignored by them and had evident difficulties in playing with the ball or in running, and this sometimes made the others lose their patience. In this case, the teacher also informed me that the family situation was very critical, and that they were known by the Local Health service to be socially at risk.

During the interviews she showed an attitude that I have commented on previously in other victims with such a high score in this sample: very often, when talking about herself, she gave the impression of dissimulating her feelings. When talking to me, she usually smiled faintly and tended to say that everything was fine, or else she just repeated the others' answers, however my impression was that it was only a strategy to finish the interview as soon as possible. While she was watching the tape, she showed 'interest+joy' (92.6% the first time, 85.1% the second time), but also showed 'non coded movement' which indicated a 'blank' expression while she was specifically watching herself (7.4% the first time, 14.9% the second time).

She also showed a very strong capacity for empathy towards others. A particular passage from the first IPR interview is quoted here, in which children were recalling the group activity and they were commenting on one of them (a bystander girl) who was being teased by the other members of the group. The bystanders were saying that they got a bit angry with this girl because she did not react to their provocations and they were not able to understand what she was really feeling as she
just smiled without talking. When I asked Alessia how she felt towards that girl, she answered:

Alessia: "In my opinion she was a bit ashamed...........because she blushed......"  
Bystander girl:"It is true, I was, in fact."  
LB:"In your opinion she was a bit ashamed......and how did you feel towards her?"  
Alessia:"She.....she , for example, felt teased by us........by what we were saying.."  
LB:"Anything that you were not saying?"  
Alessia:"Don't know". 
LB:"How did you want to behave at that moment?"  
Alessia:"I wanted to say:'Let's change the subject'."

She was very accurate in describing the other's feelings but when I asked her to talk about herself she answered in a very superficial way:

LB:"Did anything get in the way of how you wanted to be?"  
Alessia:"No......"  
LB:"No."  
Alessia:"For me it was alright."  
LB:"Did you like everything?"  
Alessia:"Yes."  
LB:"Anything you particularly liked?"  
Alessia:"No".

For the rest of the interview the others commented the episode and discussed their reactions and feelings, but Alessia was silent and was simply ignored by the group.

In the last interview of IPR she was in the group that talked about the abandoned dog, and always smiling, she answered the questions by merely repeating what the others had just said:

Bystander 1:" I was touched by that dog, he seemed very sad to me."  
LB:"Alessia, have you noticed that dog?"  
She nods.  
LB:"How....how did you feel towards him?"
Alessia: "...I was touched..."
LB: "How did you want to behave in that situation?"
Alessia is silent.
Bystander 2: "When I saw them kicking him I was very sad."
Bystander 3: "I didn't see them."
LB: "Alessia, how do you think they felt at that time?"
Alessia (embarrassed): "I...I didn't see them."

But later, when I asked her about anything she did not like:

Alessia: "I didn't like it when they kicked the dog."
LB: "Anything you liked?"
Alessia: "Don't know."

For the rest of the interview she also tended to simply repeat the others' answers, continuing sometimes to contradict herself, and I had the impression that she was simply trying to avoid talking about herself. She was the only victim in the whole experimental sample who increased their victim score from peer nominations after the intervention and who did not show any kind of improvement. This was confirmed by quantitative and qualitative data.

In this case also, I wonder if such a serious background can be in any way dealt with effectively through a simple anti-bullying intervention at school. I think that in these cases it would be necessary for them to have individual therapeutic intervention, or even family therapy.
Chapter 8

CONCLUSIONS

"That we often derive sorrow from the sorrow of others, is a matter of fact too obvious to require any instances to prove it; for this sentiment, like all the other original passions of human nature, is by no means confined to the virtuous and humane, though they perhaps may feel it with the most exquisite sensibility. The greatest ruffian, the most hardened violator of the laws of society, is not altogether without it". (Adam Smith, 1759).

Introduction.

This chapter is divided into different sections:

Section 1. Discussion.

1.1. Discussion of the results of this study.

This briefly summarizes all the results of this study integrating them through a discussion and makes connections to my previous research questions and hypothesis and to the current literature. An interpretation of the overall findings is then undertaken.

1.2. Limitations and innovations of this study.

The study is analysed from a methodological point of view, exploring the limitations of its structure and ascertaining which aspects, by contrast, were innovative and useful in terms of exploring the process of anti-bullying intervention.

Section 2. Suggestions.

This part is dedicated to the possible ideas and stimuli for teachers and schools involved in anti-bullying projects which might be used as a means to improve the effectiveness of interventions according to the results and the discussions suggested by this study. More particularly, it represents a consideration of possible practical strategies to be used in building an effective anti-bullying structure in Italian schools.

2.2. Suggestions for future research in this field.

Finally, I consider the future extension of this study and other different methodologies which might be used to approach a study aimed towards exploring anti-bullying interventions in schools, their effects and their overall effectiveness.

Moreover, reflecting on innovative or discordant results on bullies and victims' aspects as compared to the current literature, I consider possible new areas of research which might focus on a deeper exploration of the issues as a means to better understand the phenomenon of bullying.
1. Discussion.

1.1. Discussion of the results of this study.

In this section all the results are presented in summary, trying to integrate them and connect them to the current literature, through similarities and contrasting results.

First of all, when comparing the peer nominations of experimental and control classes, before and after the intervention, no significant results were found. This is the only result in this study that is really concerned to measuring the effectiveness of the intervention, as it is the only one based on a comparison between control and experimental classes and that uses the time factor of before and after the intervention. On the other hand, this was not included as being part of the aims of this study, which by contrast considered research questions that were specifically focused on the process of intervention, not on its effectiveness.

Even though the overall change was not significant, it was found that in experimental classes there were more changes of status among children, whereas in control classes usually children kept the same status with the same score. In both the two groups of classes, it was shown that there were cases of children who became bullies or victims at the end of the period, despite being defined as "other" or bystander at the beginning. In the experimental group however, there was a larger number of children who improved their position as compared to control classes.

It is not possible here to argue that the anti-bullying intervention was, thus, particularly effective, but at least it seems that the Cooperative Group Work carried out in class and the IPR produced some changes and "movements" that are not present in control classes.
In order to answer the principal research questions of this thesis ("What happens during a session of anti-bullying intervention? How do bullies, victims and bystanders react during that process?" and "Do they show a change in their emotional expressions at the end of the period of intervention?") , the quantitative and qualitative results concerning IPR are discussed here. Analysis concerning possible differences among the experimental classes did not show significant results. Neither did qualitative explorations carried out through the teachers' diary and my notes collected during the meetings of supervisions. Thus, it was possible to assume that the experimental classes could be considered as a whole group, and to carry out statistical analysis and qualitative explorations.

Quantitative and qualitative results concerning the two sessions of IPR show that during the process itself, children were stimulated to develop awareness of the problem of bullying, a particular attention to emotion, and, through it, in some cases, empathy towards the others while they were expressing their feelings. Especially in the second interview, children showed more spontaneity in their ability to explore their own emotional fields and those of others and in using proper definitions, becoming often more articulate than in the first interview. In general, they also showed a stronger interest and participation in what was going on, especially bystanders, as indicated by MAX results.

In fact, during the second interview in all the groups there was less need for me to intervene with numerous questions to help them in the shared recalling. This was because they all were more responsive to spontaneous analysis of the different aspects of their video-recording during an open discussion. Through the emotional exploration offered by IPR, in some groups (in one even during the first interview, see pp.153, Matilde's case) the
awakening of an emotional contact and support was built during the session itself in a very clear process. This was due to "here and now" intervention.

In fact, the main element of IPR hinges on the belief that the discussion and the emotional exploration must be about a past interaction which recalls feelings in a "there and then" dimension. For this reason it was applied for the first time by Cowie et al. (1994) as an index of the emotional changes experienced under the effects of CGW. Actually, the power of IPR is that by merely recalling the past with other people there is an individual empathic increase in the present. This was not always true, of course, and there are clear results showing that, for example, bullies tended to interrupt others in both the interviews (even if significantly only in the first), indicating a difficulty, still at the end of the period of intervention, in listening to others and in giving them their own space and time. Otherwise, the fact that victims were the most interrupted by others only during the first interview, indicates that probably the second time they were more capable of assertiveness, and that the others were more available to listen to them.

Quotations presented in chapter 7, concerning examples of the second interview, confirm these aspects, as well as the results concerning the naturalistic observation in the playground. In fact, these data show that at the end of the period of intervention children were often involved in group situations, talking and discussing together. Victims improved in their social skills, being able to be involved in group plays and interactions, and, at the same time, bystanders dedicated more time to activities such as talking and walking together with them. Still, the style of activities was quite and calm, often stationary, as if victims tended to keep some difficulties in letting themselves go in livelier plays.
Other studies in this field showed that victims in the playground tend to spend their time in solitary and stationary plays (Boulton, 1995; Pepler et al., 1996). I see this aspect quite related to their tendency to deny their own emotions, as an index of inability of being in a deep and relaxed contact with the own needs, emotions and feelings either physically or psychologically. During the sessions of IPR, for example, they seemed to be almost detached from the recalled activity and from their own emotional process, as results of MAX indicated, especially in the first interview and this confirm literature about prolonged victimization and my previous hypothesis (Herman, 1992; Shengold, 1989; Myron-Wilson & Smith, 1997; chapter 2).

As was mentioned in chapter 2, these descriptions of victims not showing their own emotions contrast with other studies that defined victims as overtly expressing their suffering and pain or being counter-aggressive or showing nonchalance (Patterson, Littman & Bricker, 1976; Perry, Williard & Perry, 1990; Salmivalli, Karhunen, Lagerspetz, 1996). In fact, my data cannot offer the possibility of understanding if this lack of emotional expression is due to dissociation, or to fear. Even Darwin, states that "other emotions and sensations are called depressing, because they have not habitually led to energetic action, excepting just at first, as in the case of extreme pain, fear, and grief, and they have ultimately caused exhaustion" (1872). In chapter 2 we saw that Frijda also quotes some cases in which fear or strong suffering produce a completely bland facial expression (Frijda & Tcherkassof, 1997).

My belief, especially thinking of the difficulties that these children often have in physical coordination and in general in spontaneous social activities, is more orientated to an integrated hypothesis of a dissociation due to a deep and unconscious fear of social contacts. The results of this study showed that this attitude significantly decreased in the second interview, giving
space to a more lively participation in the session of IPR and a deeper awareness about the own emotional process. Having said that, in the second interview some victims still showed more “blank face” than bullies and bystanders, and tended more than others to avoid discussions concerning themselves.

Bystanders after the 8 months of intervention changed their attitude of total indifference towards victims, typical of the beginning, as is shown by the quotations in chapter 6 and by the significant increase of empathy in verbal expressions during IPR. Another interesting result was the “interest” emotion coded through MAX, especially in the second interview, indicating that they were much more involved in the group activity and in the interactive process. As was mentioned, they also showed in the playground a more flexible availability to spend time with victims, often renouncing more lively play.

The group that showed more negative behaviours and less changes after the intervention was that of bullies. During the first interview of IPR they expressed indifference or contempt towards the others. In general they were quite hyperactive during both sessions of IPR and especially in the first they used to interrupt the others, stand up, or jumping on the sofa. In the second interview, they behaved much better. They were also more able to name and express their own emotions, showing themselves to be aware of their negative emotions towards the others, and they showed more empathy than the first time. The ability to name an emotion means that there is at least the capacity to take on the responsibility of that emotion, and this can be a first positive step towards a more mature control over it in social situations. However, in the playground they did not show any significant changes, continuing to play football over the whole period of intervention and being involved in lively activities such as rough and tumble, even if they increased time spent alone in
the second session of observations. These behaviours were found also in other
studies using naturalistic observation (Boulton, 1995; Boulton and Smith,
1994; Pepler et al., 1996; Costabile et al., 1997). Unlike victims, who, in this
study, after the intervention, showed significant changes that gradually moved
them away from the results typically presented by the current literature, bullies
kept their characteristics in the playground despite 8 months of intervention
activity. Basically, their behaviour did not show a particular effort to meet
others’ wishes in terms of plays and social interactions.

In experimental classes the questionnaire which concerned whether
children liked group activities showed that bullies didn't like them, or at least
liked them much less than other children. This trend is also evident in control
classes, but certainly much more evident in those in which children were forced
to collaborate continuously in groups and had to respect rules and the ideas of
others. Other studies confirmed this result (Smith, Cowie & Berdondini, 1994;
Cowie, Smith, Boulton and Laver, 1994).

I think that this is quite understandable for the following reasons: for
bystanders the cooperative activity can generally be quite funny, as they are
stimulated to cooperate with others and after some weeks they have little
difficulty in understanding the aim of the project; for victims, this can be a first
"officially accepted" occasion to talk, participate and explain their ideas and
points of view, and thus be respected by others during that time, so it is natural
that they declared that they liked this kind of activity a lot. It would be
interesting to check whether they had difficulties in being accepted by others at
the beginning and in which way and how they reacted.

By contrast, bullies are the group of children that are penalized most in
their spontaneous behaviour by this cooperative work and this is because they
are forced to do exactly the opposite of what they are used to doing: they must
wait for their turn, listen, help, and so on, and maybe for this reason, out of a structured situation, they feel free to continue their more natural and spontaneous behaviour. This, of course, is a very important element to consider and tackle when planning an anti-bullying intervention project.

Once again, the result that CGW and IPR were not appreciated by bullies and that they did not change their spontaneous attitudes is not valid for all the children belonging to this category. There were strong individual differences that must be considered in order to value critically the results of this study. Case studies, for example, showed that both in the categories of victims and of bullies there were children who improved in social abilities, self-awareness and empathy towards the others in a strong and overt way (chapter 7, cases of Lisa and Marco). At the same time, there were children who kept the same characteristics showed at the beginning of the period of intervention, and were not capable of any kind of improvements (chapter 7, cases of Paolo and Alessia).

With regard to this aspect, results concerning the differences within the categories of bullies and victims are quite interesting, even if they do not show strong differences. They indicate, however, that even in the same category of children there were quite clear differences, such as being particularly aggressive as bullies, or physically clumsy as victims. The case studies suggested that the two children who improved, used to belong to the categories of bully and victim with quite low scores and they did not present particularly aggressive behaviour or clumsy characteristics at the beginning of the period, unlike those who did not improve.

It could be interesting to explore this area of study better, trying to define clearer differences within bullies and within victims, also in order to plan an
intervention program, in which different potentialities and needs should be considered.

Studies by Kalverboer (1990) on hyperactive and clumsy children confirm that there are connections between these characteristics and the child's social status (including the role of bully or victim). Also other studies concerning for instance, hyperactive children, describe them as showing more socially negative behaviour towards peers than controls (Campbell & Paulauskas, 1979; Kalverboer, 1990; Vaessen & Kalverboer, 1986). They demonstrate tendencies of being easily irritated, more aggressive, interfering with the others' activities more often, attempting to dominate peers and taking the initiative in positive as well as in negative social contact (physical aggression included). In my study, "aggressive bullies" were certainly hyperactive and were usually involved in very lively games and rough-and-tumble. Even during football, they demonstrated more irritability than others, tended to keep the control of the play and even violated the rules more. Overall, they used to run and move in the playground much more than the others. Concerning clumsy children, Kalverboer (1988) found that they are often rejected by peers, are considered by their teachers to be withdrawn, submissive and self conscious, are often teased and are sometimes the scapegoat in the group.

"Some lack self-confidence, possibly a reaction to difficulties they have with the execution of socially important skills, preventing them from participation in play or sports" (Kalverboer, 1990).

In addition to the results offered by the present study, I would like to conclude that my impression, carrying on this intervention project was that indeed IPR offers children the possibility of expressing themselves in front of others. The protection and help of an inquirer provides them the possibility of tackling even confrontational situations which could be critical in a naturalistic
setting, and that can be easily resolved through the inquirer's intervention and the IPR questions. I do stress the importance of a structured session of debriefing with children about shared activities during anti-bullying intervention. This is besides the group activity because it is mainly in this situation that children develop their empathic and social potential. Or, at least, I believe that in order to obtain a really cooperative capacity in children during group work, it is necessary to integrate their interactions with this kind of deep debriefing. It is only by giving each one of them the opportunity to express their own ideas and feelings about a task, and by comparing the different emotional impacts and points of view, that their task can improve the next time. Only in this way, will there be a common awareness the next time about each one's responsibility and social difficulties or abilities. I believe that this contributes to increment empathy in children and that the development of this kind of emotional and social capacity is the key for an improvement in peer relationships.

Empathy is an ability that can be stimulated and increased in everybody, respecting different time and rhythm. But my opinion is that, especially in modern societies, which are now more and more individualistic, we adults often give children the impression that they should stay out of others' difficulties, or away from violent episodes and should only defend their own security and self interests. In Italy we have many examples of similar bullying situations, such as social corruption, the "mafia", or even real episodes of bullying among young soldiers in their barracks. In all these cases the main difficulty in changing things is to break down the silent acceptance of bystanders. It is the fear and the hypocrisy that makes bystanders witness horrible behaviour against other people without intervening.
In my view, the problem of bystanders' responsibility must be seriously considered in order to tackle a social phenomenon like bullying.

Finally, from the results of this study, I think that the consideration about possible individual behavioural and emotional difficulties is a very important element in order to plan an anti-bullying intervention program. It is fundamental to assume that through this kind of strategy not all the children will change or not necessarily for the better, but that this type of approach is certainly a good stimulus for the class system, for the group, because it works on a shared awareness and on communication. I am also convinced that in order to obtain more clear results through these strategies it is necessary to follow the classes longitudinally for some years.

1.2. Limitations and innovations of this study.

The first limitation is that I do not have comparable data between control classes and experimental classes, except for information gained through peer nominations. I was not interested in the effectiveness of this intervention as I assumed that it was certainly a positive stimulus, but I realize that the study would be more complete if it could also provide material which is focused on the final outcomes of intervention. This could only be done by gathering further data on control classes (such as naturalistic observations in the playground). This would allow comparisons about possible changes that occurred before and after the intervention.

There are also some highly practical reasons for not involving control classes as well as the theoretical choice only to explore the intervention process itself. This is a study of a "real" situation and this means that there is a limited amount of control over several variables and these do not always depend on our own organization. In this particular school, teachers and parents of children
belonging to control classes refused to involve their children in video-recordings and only agreed to give the children questionnaires concerning peer nominations and whether they liked group work. This was because the first one was anonymous and because both questionnaires were not too demanding. I am aware that the criteria for choosing control groups in an experimental study should be different from those that I used, and more structured. In fact, I wanted to observe what was happening in a “real situation”. Thus, it seemed to me that it was more important to accept the reality and not to force teachers and parents into doing things they did not want to do.

Another limitation is that in experimental classes teachers were free to use the anti-bullying strategy that they preferred and this means that in each class as lightly different intervention structure was implemented. This creates problems in using experimental classes as a whole group which might be compared to the control one, but for me the primary focus is the IPR process itself, and the fact that it should be added to the anti-bullying intervention, whatever type it is. In fact, I think that even if I had forced all teachers to use the same techniques, classes would be difficult to compare anyway because each teacher personalizes the intervention process and this depends on his/her mentality, previous experiences, the class situation, and so on. Moreover, I doubt that in a similar situation the degree of effectiveness would be the same for all the classes, because each teacher had some difficulties towards at least one strategy and this certainly would influence children’s perceptions and consequently their improvement. We saw that the important thing in creating cooperation in a class is not the group activity itself, but the way in which it is carried out (Dunne & Bennett, 1990).

In this sense, I think that the experimental classes in this sample can be included as a whole group because, independently of which activity was used in
each one, teachers and pupils were allowed to choose what they wanted to do and they both were highly motivated towards the intervention. They felt the focus of the project intensely and so they were all dedicated to the idea of creating a really cooperative atmosphere in their classes and they all worked towards the same aims. As is shown in chapter 5, a common basis for all the classes was the debriefing, that was carried out after every cooperative activity following the same rules by all the teachers and the same sequences of questions. Moreover, the same time was dedicated to this activity by each teacher and with a similar degree of attention and participation. In fact, differences among these classes were not found. For this reason I considered it reasonable to unite all the classes in one group and to analyse their data together.

Another limitation of the methodologies I used is that they were all focused on individuals. The video-recording of both the IPR and of the naturalistic observation concerned each participant separately. This prevented me observing the group situation and the reactions of the other members of the group during significant moments. By contrast, as bullying is a group and social phenomenon, in order to understand what is going on in a group of peers (either during a IPR setting or of naturalistic play) I think that it would also be useful to observe the whole group dynamics. I chose to focus on individuals because I wanted to observe differences in the expressions and behaviour of bullies, victims and bystanders, and to explore their longitudinal changes. During the study I realized that the outlook that I originally had was not complete. I have deferred the possible explorations and extensions of this study regarding the whole group and the use of proper methodologies, to the last part of the second section of this chapter.
Finally, another methodological limitation of this study was the use of MAX to observe facial emotional expressions. Even if Izard (1979) states that this system can be used and applied to children and not only to infants, the coded emotions were only those called "primary" or "basic", such as anger, joy, fear, interest, disgust, contempt, sadness, surprise and distress. All the "secondary" emotions, such as pride, jealousy, envy and so on, are not considered. Sometimes, during the coding process I had the impression that some expressions were also related to these latter emotions, and so I think that some information was lost.

Besides that, it seemed to me to be quite limiting to interpret an emotion by only observing the muscle contractions. I think that the emotional expressions are more than that. I consider emotions to be more of a relational type of communication and I think that to really understand which emotions are occurring between two or more persons one should observe a more generalized and complete exchange between them. This would include verbal and facial expressions, body posture, interpersonal distance and so on. However, this would be the case in a hypothetical study of a group situation and would involve one that was not focused on individuals as in the present one. In my study, MAX was an index of emotional expression which was strongly supportive of the verbal analysis about this subject and it seemed to me to be useful enough in observing children' reactions during IPR - even if it was not perfectly exhaustive.

I think that the results of this coding were helpful in differentiating bullies, victims and bystanders during their recall sessions and in opening a new perspective about their different reactions. The fact that verbal and non verbal data are not discordant is a further validation of the choice of these methodological techniques in this particular research.
The fact that this study is based on the observation of a real situation and tries to analyse it through different methodologies, seems to me to be the main positive and innovative quality of the study. Indeed, despite its limitations, it offered the opportunity to explore different sides of this phenomenon and of children involved in it, that are quite unusual and unexplored - but that seem to me to be necessary in order to know more about bullying and to plan an effective intervention strategies in schools.

I also consider that the idea of focusing the attention of the observation on the actual process of the intervention sessions instead of on the outcomes is quite an innovation. This provided the opportunity to deeply understand the form of intervention which was used and to clarify some pointers towards the creation of a good anti-bullying project in the future (see next section).

Moreover, by observing bullies', victims' and bystanders' reactions during the sessions of anti-bullying intervention, I think that this study offered the possibility of knowing something more about these children's characteristics and the differences in the ways they expressed their own emotions and perceived the others. It was also possible to explore the different ways they each changed over a period of intervention and how they lost or kept their original characteristics.

2. Suggestions.


The teachers' motivation and participation was a fundamental part of this study. Teachers involved and motivated the children in the completion of their cooperative activities in the experimental classes, and each teacher discussed with his/her pupils their preferred strategies in the Cooperative Group Work. Thus, the teacher's motivation towards intervention is one of the most
important variables in achieving an effective anti-bullying intervention. If a teacher believes in cooperation and he/she wants to tackle bullying and once it has been made clear that the principal aim of CGW is just cooperation among children, I think that he/she could even carry out a normal curriculum by dividing the class into groups. I suppose there would probably be good results even without applying any special techniques apart from group discussions about the dynamics of their work.

In my opinion, the study of the use of IPR plus CGW is very useful indeed for understanding the general importance of using group discussion at the end of every anti-bullying strategy. This should allow the recalling of shared experiences and their analysis through an exploration of their own emotions and their perceptions of the others' feelings. This part is a process that is maybe the most important aspect of the anti-bullying strategy itself. This is because in the recalling session children are stimulated to empathize with one another, to listen to their own feelings and those of others and, at the same time, their attention is also focused on possible problems within a group that during the activity itself were maybe not identified by all members of the group, or certainly not explained and analysed.

Thus, apart from being highly motivated, a first suggestion to teachers would be that they dedicate about 20 minutes after the group activities to the recalling process and that they use a very structured methodology to do this. Even if IPR is not specifically used, teachers should involve all the children in a joint exploration of what was going on during the group work, and should guide them towards achieving "emotional education". This is where they have to listen not only to the emotions of the others but also to their own and to communicate their own experiences to each other.
Another important point that I would like to explore is the consideration of bullying as a group process. This means that teachers should not solely focus their attention on the individual bully or victim and in trying to help them as individuals. The important thing is to focus attention on the whole class, because each child in a class contributes to the creation of a relationship and has the choice of either intervening against the bully or the victim, or of not intervening at all. The teacher must understand this and also the fact that everyone in a class has responsibility towards creating and maintaining the social roles of the others and that each child should develop awareness of their own responsibility in the problem of bullying. This phenomenon must be faced and solved together by trying to build a supportive system for all children—bullies, victims and those who observe, but are not capable of intervention.

Finally in my opinion, it is important to be able to distinguish between chronic bullies and victims as compared to children who only become bullies and victims in certain circumstances. Concerning this aspect, I noticed that often teachers were worried about their own capacity to help children with very serious social difficulties and were uncertain about their responsibilities towards them. The limit of this responsibility must be clear. Teachers are not supposed to be their pupils' psychotherapists. They certainly have the duty to educate children outside the school curriculum, in terms of social abilities and the sharing of emotions. The teacher's principal aim, however, must be to help classroom children in their learning of social rules, such as respecting themselves and others, developing empathy and the ability to cooperate and be responsive when listening to others.

Through these different strategies I consider that their task should be seen in the perspective of a group process. Concerning specific individual cases, these are very often linked to family dynamics and responsibility belongs
to other professional roles, such as psychotherapists and psycho-pedagogists (psycho-educational figures are officially provided in every Italian school, but in reality are often absent). In Italy every school is supposed to refer to a professional figure like these. Unfortunately the reality is different. Schools often lack specific staff to work with pupils, other than individuals who support children with physical handicaps, even if these professionals are provided. When these figures do exist, they are rarely available to collaborate with teachers in deciding the best educational interests of children. This links with a very serious problem in Italian schools: the almost total lack of communication (and consequently collaboration) that exists among the different professional and non professional adults that are involved with the children - teachers, non teaching staff, families, psychological supporters, and so on.

Hence, the first step is to sensitize all these spheres and the main reason why I have been working in Tuscany and Emilia Romagna with colleagues, is to propagate the information which is available about the phenomenon of bullying and on specific anti-bullying intervention projects. We have organized meetings with headmasters, teachers and parents in order to stimulate their awareness of this problem, but also to inform them about the obstacles to tackling it - the first being their own lack of communication and trust. The impression I had when working with teachers in this study was that they often feel that they are alone in their interest in this problem and they feel abandoned and without any specific support. Of course, this represents a difficulty in terms of maintaining the teacher's enthusiasm for overcoming bullying over long periods of time.

On the other hand, there was great success in identifying some very problematic cases of bully and victim children, where teachers realized that despite the activities in the classroom and the group discussions among
children, they were still unable to help them sufficiently. They consequently contacted the school psychotherapist (in this case there was one), but the psychotherapist was not available for further collaboration. So, they finally contacted the families and after talking to them, they were able to convince the parents to apply to a family therapist, and all three families were accepted. From that moment, teachers reported that their work was much easier in the classroom situation, and that the three children had started to improve their relationships with others (even if this was at the end of the period).

Fortunately, since last year the problem of bullying in Italy has been made public through media services, books and newspapers. This could well facilitate the future involvement of parents with all the staff who work within and around schools, so that it might be possible to also create a movement for "whole school policies" in that country. This is surely the most effective strategy for tackling this problem and until we are able to reach this goal, the positive impact of anti-bullying interventions will be just partial.

2.2. Suggestions for future research in this field.

I think that for the future it will be useful to continue carrying out studies concerning the nature and effects of real interventions in schools. This is in order to define the consequences of anti-bullying techniques and to eventually change them or adapt them according to the specific sample. Is there a methodology that offers the possibility of obtaining clear evidence about the effectiveness of an anti-bullying intervention in the classrooms?

The intervention strategies that are used with pupils usually concern Cooperative Group Work and Peer Support techniques. Both of these concern all the children in the group. So, besides methodologies that are focused on individuals (such as qualitative data which is focused even more so towards the
individual, interviews and naturalistic observations), I think that it would be necessary to apply a methodology which is focused on the group process and the quality of the relationships among the members of the group. This would be helpful in understanding the different types of bullying, even those that are more covert and, over a period of intervention, it would be possible to observe how the whole group reacts to the intervention process and to observe who improves the quickest and which strategies are applied by the children in order to be integrated in peer groups and the responses of the others to the situation.

Particularly, I think that the ideal method would be one that could offer the possibility of following the progress of different groups, by analysing the progress made in group dynamics over the time. This analysis should always be done during the intervention process itself and concern different sessions. This would provide the possibility of exploring those qualitative aspects that methods such as self reports cannot measure, but that certainly represent the first consequences of these intervention strategies (and that occur much before a decrease in bullying episodes themselves).

I would like to see an application of the method known as Co-regulation Coding System, Fogel (1994), which is explained in the theoretical approach in chapter 3. This method was created to explore the quality of a relationship between two or more persons (it was particularly used to study the Mother/infant dyad) and involved longitudinal studies which were used to follow the qualitative development of a relationship over time. It was applied to groups of peers in an Italian pilot study (Berdondini et al., 1997), and I would like to apply it to a sample of children who are involved in the IPR process, which is in fact also a group recalling a shared experience. It would be interesting to also apply this method to the video-recording as a means of achieving more effective analysis of naturalistic behaviour.
Finally, from the present study two other results emerged as particularly interesting in my opinion. Firstly, the victims' apparent lack of reactions when facing their own emotions and secondly, the differences within the bully and victim categories. It seems to me that it would be useful to explore both of these two new aspects of the problem because they could be fundamental to understanding the phenomenon itself, and thus, to defining a more focused anti-bullying intervention project.

For both of the variables it would be necessary to use more specific methodologies. When considering the victims' reaction, first of all it would be important to have a more extended sample, and also data concerning their usual facial and body reactions during "real" bullying episodes, for example as seen in the playground. This would be additional to the data concerning verbal and nonverbal expressions of emotion which were shown by the children when discussing a recalled group experience.

As for the concept of differences within bully and victim categories, for this it would be necessary to have a more extended variety of categories which concerned the naturalistic observation of children (for example could also be considered verbal communication), and additional data on observed changes in the children during group activities. These could also be coded by using the Co-regulation Coding System. In fact, this method could provide the possibility of distinguishing how the behaviour of the individual (through innovation, active or passive participation, coercion, etc.) can make a difference by influencing others or being influenced by the reactions of others and this is able to signify how the whole group progresses and changes over time and how they are different from other groups.

By comparing the results of these qualitative data, both individual and systemic, among several bullies and victims it would be possible to understand
in which aspects they all show improvements through anti-bullying strategies, and in which, by contrast, some of them retain their behavioural and emotional disorders. Additionally, understanding of the reactions of peers to such change or stasis in their classmates' behaviour would allow for greater insight into group situations in the classroom.
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