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Abstract

Research has shown that bystanders more often fail to or are slower to help a victim in emergency when there are other bystanders than when there are not. The study presented in this paper is a qualitative case study with a focus on students' own reasons why they do not help a classmate in emergency when there are other children witnessing the emergency situation in the real-life classroom case studied. Grounded theory methods were used to analyse the data. The individual conversations with the students indicated a variety of definitions of the specific distress situation when they recalled and talked about the classroom incident. During the process of the analysis seven concepts of definitions associated with passive or non-intervention bystander behaviour were constructed and grounded in the empirical material: trivialisation, dissociation, embarrassment association, busy working priority, compliance with a competitive norm, audience modelling, and responsibility transfer. Relations between these concepts of definitions were also analysed. However, this study is a first step and a first report from an ongoing study about school children as helper and bystander.

1. Introduction

The break is over and some of the students in the fifth grade are in the cloakroom, taking off their coats and jackets. Chris, one of the students, is lying on the floor, about 2m from the classroom doorway. He is holding his left arm with his right hand. His face is flushed with an expression of pain, and he is crying very quietly. Some of the students are already sitting down. The teacher, who is talking to some students in another part of the classroom, has not noticed Chris yet. The students entering the classroom just pass Chris by and take their seats. One student, Robin, who comes in from the cloakroom, stops beside Chris and asks him: "What's happened, Chris?" Chris says that John's knee accidentally hit his arm. Robin then leaves him alone and takes his seat. Some students standing or sitting near Chris look at him now and then. "Now sit down in your places so we can begin", the teacher tells the class. Chris is still lying on the floor, holding his arm with his hand and quietly crying. After a while David, another student, gets up, goes over to Chris and asks him: "What's happened?" Chris does not answer. David stays with Chris. David looks serious. "And you sit down too, Chris!" the teacher tells Chris in a louder voice. "He's been hurt", David tells the teacher. The anger in the teacher's face disappears. She comes over to Chris to find out what is the matter with him (Field note, fifth grade, in the classroom.)

This incident is from an ethnographic study in two primary school settings by the author of this article. Here a student is in distress or in an emergency situation, and the other students just walk past him and look at him without offering any help or comfort. One student asks what has happened and then leaves him alone. After a while another student comes over to the victim, asks the same question and then stays with him. This incident ends when the teacher helps and comforts him. Chris, the student in distress, is neither a low status child nor a high-status child in the class and he has no history of being bullied. He is an ordinary student with a middle status position in the class. Furthermore, during the ethnographic fieldwork, real-life emergency situations in which students act as nonhelping bystanders have been observed now and then. For example: children who are still enjoying their game, run past a classmate who has fallen down and got hurt; children who are nearby and watch as other children harass a retarded or a younger student; children who passively witness teasing incidents or a fight between other children. The main concern in this paper is to explore why most students do not intervene or help and how non-intervening as well as intervening students reason for how they act in the case presented above.

2. Prosocial behaviour in bystander situations

Eisenberg and Fabes (1998) define prosocial behaviour as a "voluntary behavior intended to benefit another" (p. 702). According to Hoffman (2000) bystander situations awaken empathic distress, i.e., the bystander feels distressed by observing someone in actual distress. This empathic distress becomes a prosocial motive by being transformed into feelings such as sympathy, compassion, guilt or empathy-driven anger. High-empathic arousal can also be seen as an aversive experience for the bystander and thus motivating him or her to reduce this aversive arousal by acting prosocially (Dovidio, Piliavin, Gaertner, Schroeder, & Clark, 1991). In several studies, relations between empathy and prosocial behavior have been found among children (for reviews, see Eisenberg, Valiente, & Champion, 2004; Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Sadovsky, 2006; Hoffman, 2000). Furthermore, internalised social norms or moral principles could also motivate people to act prosocially and to help someone in distress (e.g., Horowitz, 1971). Both Eisenberg and Mussen (1997) and Hogg and Vaughan (2005) point to two specific and widespread social norms as a basis for prosocial behaviour. According to the *norm of reciprocity* we should help those who help us. In contrast,

according to the *social responsibility norm* we should help or assist others who depend on us or need our help. These norms are acquired through socialisation. However, many factors can inhibit or overrule prosocial motives: (a) *egoistic motives* like estimating too high costs or risks on behalf of oneself as a consequence of helping (e.g., Dovidio et al., 1991; Hoffman, 2000), (b) *conflicting attitudes, social norms or moral ideas* such as loyalty, the norm of obedience to authority (e.g., Milgram, 1974), racial attitudes (Gaertner, 1975), classroom rules (e.g., Thornberg, 2006b), or other social conventions (e.g., Thornberg, 2006a), (c) *group processes and social influence* such as authority influence (e.g., Milgram, 1974), group pressure, (e.g., Thornberg, 2006a), group think (e.g., Janis & Mann, 1982), and the bystander effect (e.g., Hoffman, 2000; Latené & Darley, 1970), and (d) *lack of skills or competence*, i.e., not knowing how to help or intervene (e.g., Latené & Darley, 1970; Bierhoff, 2002; Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Latené & Darley (1970) argue that how bystanders interpret or define the emergency situation is one of the factors that influence their behaviour in the situation. This is in accordance with (a) social cognitive theories like Crick and Dodge's (1994) model of how children process social information to solve social problems, and (b) symbolic interactionism, which claims that people act in line with the meanings they derive from and interpret in social situations (Blumer, 1969), i.e., people's definition of situation influences their actions in that situation (Charon, 2001). How bystanders define the emergency situation and reason about how they behave are thus the focus of this study.

3. A social psychology oriented values education

Values education and *moral education* are used here as interchangeable concepts (cf., Berkowitz & Grych, 2000). Values education is about an introduction to values and morality, to give young people knowledge of this domain concerned with relating to other people, together with the ability to apply the values and rules intelligently, and to have the settled disposition to do so (Aspin, 2000). The topic of this study concerns *prosocial morality* (and, specifically, failures to uphold this morality) among schoolchildren in everyday life at school. Prosocial morality is about acting in the best interests of others, e.g., caring, helping, protecting others and so on (see, e.g. Arsenio & Lover, 1995). Social processes (e.g., Latené & Darley, 1970; Bandura, 2002; Zimbardo, 2004; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Thornberg, 2006a) and feelings like empathy (e.g., Hoffman, 1987, 2000; Batson, Ahmad, & Stocks, 2004; Eisenberg et al., 2004) as well as cognition (e.g., Hoffman, 2000; Dodge & Rabiner, 2004; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005) influence an individual's behaviour in social situations concerning moral matters. Therefore, a cognitive-developmental approach to moral education, with a main focus on detached and intellectualised moral discussions (e.g., Blatt & Kohlberg, 1975), is too narrow. Moral education has to deal with cognition as well as feelings, motives and behaviour if the aim is to educate a complete, moral person (see Berkowitz, 1998). Moreover, values education also has to incorporate theories and research within the field of social psychology, because group processes, social influences and a variation of students' interpretations of the social situations can develop or promote as well as inhibit or overrule prosocial morality among students. A reallife-sensitive moral education has to deal with all these factors. Research for example has indicated that a "sense of community" in the classroom correlates with the frequency of prosocial behaviour among the students, and with moral development (for a review, see Solomon, Watson, & Battistich, 2001). Hence, according to a social psychological view, the concepts of prosocial behaviour and the bystander effect are highly relevant in relation to values or moral education.

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4. Bystander effect

Research in helping behaviour has shown that bystanders more often fail or are slower to help a victim in an emergency situation when there are other bystanders around, than when there are none. This phenomenon is known as the *bystander effect*, i.e., that "the presence of other people serves to inhibit the impulse to help" (Latané & Darley, 1979, p. 38), which can be described as "the social inhibition of helping" (Latané & Nida, 1981, p. 308). Latané, Darley and their colleagues were the first researchers to investigate this empirically (Darley & Latiné, 1968; Latané & Darley, 1968,1970; Latané & Rodin, 1969). The bystander effect has also been tested and replicated in a variety of experimental situations (for a review see Latané & Nida, 1981). Examples of situations in which the bystander effect has been replicated, include falls (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1977), theft (Shaffer, Rogel, & Hendrick, 1975; Schwartz & Gottlieb, 1976), electric shock (Latané & Darley, 1976), seizures (Horowitz, 1971; Latené & Darley, 1970), smoke filling a room (Latané & Darley, 1968; Ross, 1971), requests to help a child (Thalhofer, 1971), crashes (Latané & Rodin, 1969; Clark & Word, 1972; Gaertner, 1975; Schwartz & Gottlieb, 1976), asthma attacks (Harris & Robinson, 1973), and fainting (Smith, Smythe, & Lien, 1972; Solomon, Solomon, & Stone, 1978). Only few studies have involved children as bystanders. Whereas Caplan and Hay (1989) find bystander effects among children in a natural setting, Staub (1970) finds, within an experimental setting, an increase of helping behaviour among children when they were in pairs compared to when they were alone as bystanders, which indicates the complexity in this issue, and also raises methodological questions.

Different processes can contribute to the bystander effect. *Pluralistic ignorance* refers to a collective perception or definition of the emergency situation as not being a real emergency as an effect of social comparison between the passive bystanders. Witnesses in an emergency situation can look around to see what everyone else makes of the situation and how the others are responding to it. If everyone shows passivity and at the same time they look at one another for clues as to how to behave, each person may think that the situation is perhaps not a real emergency situation because the others are not responding to it in a helping way. They infer from each other's behaviour that the situation or emergency is not serious and does not require any intervention (Latené & Darley, 1970; Darley, Teger, & Lewis, 1973; Bierhoff, 2002). Here, *social comparison* helps to define a situation (Harrison & Wells, 1991). The more ambiguous a situation is, the less likely bystanders are to help (Clark & Word, 1972, 1974; Harada, 1985). In contrast, in situations with a clear potential danger to the victim, bystanders are more likely to intervene (Fischer, Greitemeyer, Pollozek, & Dieter, 2006). The mere presence of other bystanders can also inhibit a witness from intervening or helping in an emergency situation because he or she is afraid of looking foolish or behaving in an embarrassing way in front of the others, which sometimes is referred to as a *fear of social blunders*. This social influence is known as *audience inhibition* (Bierhoff, 2002; Hogg and Vaughan, 2005). Latené & Darley (1970) found that bystanders in emergency situations are worried about embarrassing themselves and thus attempt to remain passive and cool. Audience inhibition can also be seen as a main explanation for a well-known classroom phenomenon, i.e., students not asking questions when they do not understand the content or issues in seminars. No one asks a question because everyone is afraid of looking stupid in front of the others (Miller & McFarland, 1987).

Another kind of bystander effect can emerge when several bystanders are present, and each of them assumes that the others will help. Unlike a situation with only one bystander, when there are more bystanders present, the pressure to intervene or help does not fall on anyone

special. The responsibility to help is shared by all the bystanders, and as a result, each person may be less likely to intervene. This phenomenon is known as *diffusion of responsibility* (Latené & Darley, 1970). Rutkowski, Gruder, and Romer's (1983) study indicates that a high degree of cohesiveness among the group of bystanders together with a salient social-responsibility norm among them increases the likelihood of bystanders helping. A *psychological distance* between victim and bystander, and among bystanders themselves, appears to reduce the likelihood of helping or prosocial behaviour. The social-responsibility norm (Rutkowski et al., 1983) or the altruistic norm (Horowitz, 1971) among bystanders can also counteract the bystander effect. Furthermore, *social roles* that indicate subject competence, such as nursing occupational roles (Cramer, McMaster, Bartell, & Dragna, 1988), or indicate a generalised responsibility, such as leadership roles (Baumeister, Chesner, Sender, & Tice, 1988), seem to increase the likelihood of helping behaviour. Caplan and Hay (1989) have studied bystander effects among preschool children. In their study, a low rate of helping or prosocial responses was observed among the young bystanders when they witnessed a peer in distress. Furthermore, the teachers did little to encourage children to help or intervene in actual situations when peers were in distress. In interviews with the children about two videotaped incidents in which a classmate is in distress, most of them said that the teacher is supposed to help. None of them believed that they themselves were supposed to help. According to Caplan and Hay (1989), these children appeared to be conforming to more adult-like norms, e.g., designated individuals are charged with the responsibility of helping persons in distress. Hence, "there is evidence to suggest that diffusion of responsibility may, in part, contribute to the lack of responding to companions' distress, in that the children knew how to respond to a distressed peer, but did not believe that they are supposed to do anything when more competent adult bystanders are present" (p. 240).

More recently, observational studies with the aim of investigating bullying episodes in the school playground show that when students witness bullying they seldom intervene (Craig & Pepler, 1997; Craig, Pepler, & Atlas, 2000). Other studies show that students as bystanders in bullying situations can take on different social roles (see Salmivalli, 1999). Besides victims and bullies, some students act as assistants, reinforcers, outsiders, and defenders, i.e., some students act as helping bystanders, others as nonhelping bystanders. An observation study conducted by O'Connell, Pepler, and Craig (1999) shows that bystander peers spent 54% of their time reinforcing bullies by passively watching, 21% of their time actively encouraging the bullying and only 25% of their time intervening on behalf of the victims. Moreover, helping behaviour among students during lessons can be inhibited by teacher comments and classroom rules (Thornberg, 2006b).

In the field of social psychology, research on the bystander effect has traditionally been carried out in laboratories or in artificial settings, and with an experimental or quasi-experimental design. However, these designs can easily be criticised for lacking ecological validity, which is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study can be generalized to people's everyday, natural social settings. In contrast to these studies, the study presented in this paper has been carried out in the participants' natural everyday setting concerning a real-life case involving bystanders, and how they interpret or define the emergency situation and their own non-helping or helping behaviour. Furthermore, the research on the bystander effect in emergency situations has traditionally not involved children as participants (however, for exceptions, see Caplan & Hay, 1989; Staub, 1970). In contrast to that, the present study is a single-case qualitative field study with children as participants. Bystander intervention as well as non-intervention is influenced by a variety of socio-cognitive and situational factors, and it seems reasonable that such factors would

influence young bystanders as well (cf., Caplan & Hay, 1989). Even if newer research on bullying and bystanders has been done with schoolchildren, it has been narrowed to bullying (excluding other forms of emergency situations in school settings) and narrowed in terms of methodology by using observations without interviewing the students about the events or by conducting interviews or paper-and-pencil tests without connecting it to observation data. In contrast to their design of using video recordings on two standardized situations as a means of interviewing children, Caplan and Hay (1989) argue that "interviews with children immediately following naturally occurring distress episodes in the classroom might have elicited even more valid answers" (p. 241). A critical-incident technique in which observations of schoolchildren as bystanders in real-life emergency situations are followed by interviews about the incidents and the participant's bystander behaviour has not been done. Therefore, this study enhances and extends research on the bystander effect.

The purpose of this paper is to explore how some schoolchildren define the situation and act as bystanders when a classmate is lying on the floor and crying in pain, and when there are other children witnessing the emergency situation. The study presented in this paper is a small part of an ethnographic research project about values education and moral life in school. This case study is also a first report from a research project (within the research project mentioned above) with the working name, "Students as helpers or passive bystanders".

5. Methodology

5.1. DATA COLLECTION

The case study design in this study comprises both a critical incident observation, involving a fifth-grade school class (students aged 11) and their teacher in a Swedish primary school, and individual follow-up conversations with 11 students (six girls and five boys). The critical incident is of course the bystander effect situation described in the introduction of this paper. These observational data were recorded in field-notes. During the break after the lesson the 11 individual conversations were conducted, and they took place in a secluded area of the schoolyard away from the rest of the students and teachers. The students were asked to describe the incident and their thoughts during the situation or how they experienced it. These conversations were recorded on a portable minidisc recorder, and then transcribed.

5.2. THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

The researcher in this study had been in the class for some months before the incident took place. A lot of researchers, who are interested in childhood and the social life of children, have emphasised the value of taking a research role as an atypical and less power-oriented adult. In the field study reported here the researcher had consciously worked on the field relations and the adult-child power issues by taking what sometimes is called the "least-adult role" (Mandell, 1991; Mayall, 2000) or the role of "out-of-the-ordinary adults" (Tammivaara & Enright, 1986). In the same way as Thorne's (1993) child-friendly field relations work, the researcher in this study avoided positions of authority and went through the day-to-day school life with or near the students. The researcher had also told the students at the beginning of the field work that he would not act as a teacher or someone in charge, but more as a guest who wanted to know how school life works and what it is like to be a student in school today.

5.3. DATA ANALYSIS
The principles in the qualitative analysis of the data emanate from the tradition of Grounded Theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) originally developed this methodology, which has been further developed by Strauss & Corbin (1998). The main feature is to draw concepts, categories and theories out of data, instead of beginning the research with a preconceived theory in mind (unless the aim is to elaborate and extend existing theory) (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Grounded theory is an approach that actually comprises the whole research process, and includes sampling, data collection and data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This particular case was chosen because it was about a distress situation and an incident involving the bystander effect. It was a critical incident with a potential source for recording data in line with the aim of this study. Furthermore, the eleven students who participated in the individual conversations were chosen because the author of this paper observed that they all clearly saw the student Chris lying on the floor, quietly crying. Nine of them did not intervene at all with any kind of helping behaviour. Two of them (Robin and David) did intervene.

The grounded theory method is a systematic and constant comparison analysis of data. The first step of data analysis in this study was an open coding, with a search for indicators. The second step was a conceptual sorting, in which comparisons between the coded indicators were made. The aim of comparing indicators with each other was to look for similarities and differences in order to sort them into clusters and sort them conceptually. The outcome of this analytic process was concepts about the students' definitions of the distress or the emergency situation. The third step was pattern searching. Here the aim was to search for connections between the concepts generated from the data. The outcome of this third analysis process was both premature and incomplete because the empirical material was too limited to generate a complete pattern. However, the analysis points towards making a new sample in order to collect more data.

6. The non-helping students' definitions of the situation

The individual conversations with the students indicated a variety of definitions of the specific distress situation when they recalled and talked about the classroom incident. During the analysis process, seven concepts of definitions associated with passive or non-intervention bystander behavior were constructed and grounded in the empirical material: trivialisation, dissociation, embarrassment association, busy working priority, compliance to a competitive norm, audience modelling and responsibility transfer.

6.1. TRIVIALISATION
This concept refers to a definition of the critical event as trivial and not an emergency situation. This can be done in two ways. One way is *unserious labelling*, which means that the student just does not define the situation as serious. "I didn't think it was anything really serious" (Louise). The other form of trivialisation is *familiarisation*, which means that the student interprets or defines the situation as an ordinary or familiar event – and that everything is normal (the researcher's observations can also confirm that the victim now and then used to lie down on the floor, while playing).

> John: I didn't think it was anything serious.
> Interviewer: How come?
> John: He usually lies on the floor.

6.2. DISSOCIATION

This concept refers to a definition of the event as an emergency or distress situation, but at the same time the person in question dissociates herself or himself from the victim and the victim's distress. Also this kind of definition of the situation can take two forms. The first variant is *incident dissociation*. This definition of the event means that the person has not been involved in the social event that preceded and resulted in the distress or emergency situation.

> Interviewer: What did you think when you saw him lying there?
> Sonny: That he had hurt himself or something. It looked like he was crying a bit.
> Interviewer: How come you just went and sat down?
> Sonny: Yes, but I didn't do anything.
> Interviewer: What do you mean?
> Sonny: I didn't know what had happened.

The other form of dissociation is *relationship dissociation*, which means that the student defines him- or herself as a non-friend of the victim. "Well, but I am not his friend" (Sandra).

6.3. EMBARRASSMENT ASSOCIATION

This concept refers to a definition of the event as an emergency or distress situation, but at the same time the student associates the situation with feelings of embarrassment. One way of doing so is to interpret the situation as being embarrassing for the victim that the others are looking at him. The student does not want to join "the embarrassment-making audience" and make the victim even more embarrassed *(victim-oriented embarrassment association)*. As a result of this embarrassment association, the student avoids or leaves the situation.

> Interviewer: What did you think when you saw him lying on the floor?
> Julia: I thought, I wondered what had happened, and then I didn't go over to him, I just sat down in my place.
> Interviewer: How come you didn't go over to him, but sat down in your place instead?
> Julia: There were so many people all around.
> Interviewer: Were there a lot of people?
> Julia: Yes, and they were all looking. And maybe it was embarrassing for him that everyone was standing there.
> Interviewer: Mm. What did you think then?
> Julia: Well, but if someone is crying or something, and if a lot of people are standing around, then it will usually be pretty embarrassing, I think. So we didn't all need to stand there.

The embarrassment association can also be about "stage fright" and a fear that the audience will tease you or judge you negatively *(self-oriented embarrassment association)*.

> Interviewer: What did you want to do when you saw him?
> Julia: I don't know. There were so many others there, who were looking. It would have been embarrassing to go over to him and comfort him or something.
> Interviewer: How do you mean?
> Julia: Well, somebody might start teasing me, and think that I'm in love with him or something like that.

6.4. AUDIENCE MODELLING
This concept refers to a definition of the event where the social norm or the model for the behaviour in the situation is drawn from the other bystanders in the situation. "No one else did anything about it, so I didn't think about it" (Emma).

6.5. BUSY WORKING PRIORITY
This concept refers to a definition of the event as an emergency or distress situation, but at the same time the student gives priority to his or her own work project instead of helping behaviour.

> Interviewer: So you didn't go over to him, but sat down in your place instead. How come you didn't go over to him?
> Julia: Perhaps he felt embarrassed. And I also wanted to get started with my story.

6.6. COMPLIANCE WITH A COMPETITIVE NORM
This concept refers to a definition of the event as an emergency or distress situation, but at the same time attaches a great weight to a social norm, which is in conflict with a helping behaviour in the situation. The actual competitive norm in this case is the classroom rule which prescribes that when you enter the classroom you should be quiet, directly go to your place and sit down.

> Emma: Yes, and we should go to our places and sit down when we come in after the break.
> Interviewer: You should go to your places and sit down?
> Emma: Yes, Margit [the teacher] has told us to.

6.7. RESPONSIBILITY TRANSFER
This concept refers to a definition of the event as a distress or emergency situation, but at the same time the student does not define a personal responsibility to help the victim. Instead, the responsibility is transferred to other people. In some of the definitions expressed by the students, the responsibility is transferred to *the teacher* – the teacher has the responsibility to help the victim, not the student.

> Eric: I thought it was for real, that he was hurt.
> Interviewer: How come you thought that but didn't do anything?
> Eric: I saw him lying there, and then thought that Margit [the teacher] would go over to him.
> - - -
> Interviewer: I could see that. How come everyone just passed him by and went to their places?
> Sandra: Because that's what we usually do. We go to our places, and it's Margit [the teacher] who goes over to him and asks what has happened.
> Interviewer: That's what usually happens?
> Sandra: Yes, or some friend goes to him and asks: "What's happened?"
> Interviewer: All right, but how come you didn't go over to him and ask or do something?
> Sandra: Well, but I'm not his friend.

In the last excerpt Sandra also transfers the responsibility to *the victim's friends* – the victim's friends ought to help the victim, not her because she defines herself as a non-friend. The next excerpt gives another illustration of this form of responsibility transfer.

> Interviewer: Almost none of the students went over to him and talked to him. Who do you think should go over to him and talk to him when he is lying there like that?
> Julia: His friends, I think. These kids who are his best friends, who spend a lot of time with him.

A third variant of responsibility transfer is to transfer the responsibility to *the transgressor*, i.e., to the person who has hurt or upset the victim.

> Sonny: And then I heard that John had knocked him down, so I thought that he should go and comfort him.
> Interviewer: That John should comfort him?
> Sonny: Yes, and say, "I'm sorry".

All these concepts (trivialisation, dissociation, embarrassment association, busy working priority, compliance to a competitive norm, audience modelling, and responsibility transfer) appear to be variations of a passive bystander rationality that explains why the students did not intervene and help the victim in the emergency situation.

7. How the two helping bystanders define the situation

The main focus in this paper is on the passive bystanders and their reasons for not helping Chris. However, one analytical way of studying this is also to analyse those students who were non-passive in the situation. In Grounded Theory, this is an example of the flip-flop technique (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). To understand passive bystander behaviour better we can ask the opposite question: how do the non-passive bystanders reason for their helping or at least intervening in some way? Both non-passive bystanders explain that the reason for going over to Chris is what could be called *curious empathy*. They see his distress and they want to know what has happened and how he feels.

> Robin: Asked him if he was okay.
> Interviewer: How come you asked him that?
> Robin: Because he looked sad, and because I was wondering.

However, some of the passive bystanders refer to curious empathy too, but the motive to go over to Chris seems to be inhibited and overruled by other reasons, as we can see in their statements earlier in this paper. In the cases of Robin and David, the curious empathy appears to drive them to ask Chris what has happened. This intervention could be called *care questioning*. Care questioning seems to be derived from the student's internalised norm of caring which also appears to be interpreted or defined as universal by David:

> David: I think they should go over to him and ask what has happened.
> Interviewer: How come you think it's important that you go over and ask about what has happened?
> David: Otherwise, the person might think: no one cares about me.

The behaviour after this care questioning differs between Robin and David. Robin leaves Chris and goes back to his place and sits down. David stays with Chris. Why did Robin leave Chris? This is how he reasons about it:

> Interviewer: What did he say or do when you asked him that?
> Robin: He didn't say anything. He just lay there.
> Interviewer: What did you do then, when he just lay there and didn't say anything?
> Robin: Nothing.
> Interviewer: How come?
> Robin: I don't know. He just lay there. So I went and sat down.
> Interviewer: Yes?
> Robin: I thought that Margit [the teacher] would go over to him and take care of him. And then she did.
> Interviewer: How come you didn't take care of Chris?
> Robin: I'm not so good at it.

Here we can see two reasons. First, Robin makes a responsibility transfer to the teacher. Second, he doubts his own competence at comforting others. This is about *defining oneself as an unskilled helper*. And he leaves the scene and transfers his role to being a passive bystander. In contrast to Robin, David stays with Chris. David is quiet and he looks serious. It appears to be another way of showing care, and could be called *sympathy company*. According to my ethnographic observations it seems to be quite a common behaviour among students who intervene in situations when a peer is crying. It is not clear whether if this behaviour is a manifestation of not knowing what to say or do or a manifestation of a way of thinking that words are unnecessary and that the important thing to do is just to be there for the other person. In any way, David is the only one in this classroom situation who remains a non-passive bystander. We can find two motives in his statements: (a) curious empathy, and (b) the norm of caring. According to him, the norm of caring in situations when a peer is crying is a universal and impartial norm – everybody should act in accordance with it – because of the negative consequences that a transgression of the norm results in: "Otherwise, the person might think: no one cares about me".

8. The role of the teacher

In the history of the class, the teacher has implemented a set of classroom rules. One of these rules is that when the students enter the classroom after breaks, they have to be quiet and not talk to each other. Another classroom rule is that the students have to go straight to their places without walking around in the classroom. Now and then, the teacher reminds the students about these rules, as in the following excerpt from another lesson illustrates.

> Teacher: There are just two things that you should do when you come in from the break. What are the things you should do? What is one of them?
> David: Take off your jacket and go and sit down.
> Teacher: Go and sit down is one of the things I had in my mind about how to behave in here. And the second one is? Frida?
> Frida: Be quiet.
> Teacher: Yes. Then it's easier for everyone to begin. If some children still haven't sat down and if it isn't quiet then the lesson can't begin. The children, who sit down and are quiet, get disturbed and can't hear what I am saying. It's

very important that you come in and sit down in your place and are quiet and pay attention. Then we can have a good lesson. (Sound recording-based field note, beginning of a lesson in the classroom, fifth grade.)

Moreover, in other situations when a student is upset or is crying for some reason, if the teacher is nearby, she is the one who comforts the student. As well as other teachers in the ethnographic study, she normally does nothing to encourage the young bystanders to respond to the distress of others during the actual situations. Hence, the social processes enacted by the intervening teacher and the non-intervening students in these situations mediate to the students that the teacher has a social role as the leader and the main helper, while the students have the role of non-helpers. In the specific situation in this study, this is also the case. After a while, the teacher comes up to Chris, begins to talk to him and comforts him. As a result, Chris finally stops crying and goes to his seat.

9. The interplay of different definitions of the emergency situation

According to the analysis of the data material, it appears that some of the concepts or definitions of the situation are interconnected. While trivialization does not seem to result in responsibility transfer (because there seems to be no real emergency or distress in the situation, according to this definition, there is nothing to take responsibility for), dissociation leads to responsibility transfer. When a student dissociates, he or she appears to think that he or she has no personal responsibility to help the victim. In one case, incident dissociation just results in "I couldn't be bothered". In another cases the incident dissociation seem to result in a responsibility transfer to the teacher or to the transgressor. Relationship dissociation appears to result in a responsibility transfer to the victim's friends, but also to the teacher.

There also seems to be a connection between defining oneself as an unskilled helper on the one hand, and responsibility transfer to the teacher, on the other hand. One of the non-passive bystanders transfers himself to becoming a passive bystander by making a responsibility transfer to the teacher and by defining himself as an unskilled helper. Furthermore, compliance with a competitive norm appears to make students passive or non-intervening and seems in this case to be connected to transferring responsibility to the teacher. When a student associates the situation with feelings of embarrassment, the student seems to avoid being part of the whole scene (with the aim of not embarrassing her/himself or the victim). In contrast to the concepts of trivialisation, dissociation, embarrassment association, busy working priority, compliance with a competitive norm, audience modelling and responsibility transfer, the concepts of curious empathy and a commitment to a norm of caring appear to counteract passive bystander behaviour. According to how the boy David reasons, feels and behaves, both empathy and a commitment to a perceived universal and impartial norm of caring for people in pain or distress seem to be important motives for intervening or prosocial behaviour. These two factors appear to be cancelled out by other factors, such as dissociation, embarrassment association, audience modelling and responsibility transfer among the passive bystanders. Because of the limitations of the empirical material in this early step of the research project, it is impossible to discern a complete pattern in the interrelationship of the concepts. Further data collection and analyses have to be made to explore the relations between the above mentioned concepts (and also to find new concepts).

10. Discussion

Both the interviewer and the interviewee construct the content of an interview (see Silverman, 2001). Therefore, the researcher cannot claim to simply present the respondents' views. What a person thinks and what a person says are of course not the same (S¨alj¨o, 2000). However, the author of this article disagrees with an extreme approach claiming that researchers only would and could "focus on the conversational skills of the participants rather than on the content of what they are saying and its relation to the world outside the interview" (Silverman, 2001, p. 97). Instead of completely mistrusting what the interviewee is reporting during the interview, the researcher has to (a) be aware of the co-constructive nature of interviews and interpret the interview results with caution, and simultaneously (b) take the interviewee's report seriously.

According to current research, the bystander effect occurs among children (Caplan & Hay, 1989), and when schoolchildren witness peers in emergency situations such as being bullied, they seldom intervene (e.g., Craig & Pepler, 1997; Craig et al., 2000). This study shows that the schoolchildren have a lot of definitions of emergency situations that appear to influence their helping and non-helping behaviour in the actual situation in which a classmate is in distress and which involves other passive bystanders – elements that could shed some light on bystander effects among schoolchildren. Thus, this study expands earlier research on bystander effects (cf., Darley & Latiné, 1968; Latané & Darley, 1968,1970; for a review, see Latané & Nida, 1981) by focusing on children and natural real-life incidents in school settings. Among some of the students, the phenomenon known as diffusion of responsibility (Latené & Darley, 1970) seems to take the form of dissociation and responsibility transfer. This study not only shows diffusion of responsibility but also the psychological transfer of responsibility to the teacher, to the victim's friends, and to the transgressor. Hence, the concept of responsibility transfer is a significant complement to the concept of diffusion of responsibility by contributing to a better understanding of the socio-cognitive dynamics of responsibility as well as responsibility loss when diffusion of responsibility occurs. If a student defines that he or she is not a friend of the victim, then he or she seems to transfer the responsibility to the victim's friends. This phenomenon could be discussed in terms of psychological distance between the bystander and the victim (see Rutkowski et al., 1983) as well as in terms of social roles, i.e., the role of friend vs. the role of non-friend. Another role distinction in the classroom is between teacher and student. The role of the teacher is obviously one of leadership, but it is also reasonable to think that students can define or interpret the teacher as a more competent helper as in Caplan and Hay's (1989) study in which the children seem to think that they are not supposed to do anything when more competent adult bystanders are present. If this is true, the examples of responsibility transfer to the teacher in the study of this article have parallels with Cramer et al.'s (1988) study, which indicates that subject competence, such as nursing occupational roles, seems to increase the likelihood of helping behaviour, as well as Baumeister et al.'s (1988) study, which indicates that leaderships roles have the same function. These two studies demonstrate that people who have these social roles are more inclined to intervene than other bystanders. The study in this paper indicates that the students appear to expect this type of helping behaviour from the teacher, who has the twin social roles of being the leader and a competent helper. This definition of the situation or role expectation on the teacher among students appears to inhibit their own prosocial behaviour. Hence, this confirms other studies (Caplan & Hay, 1989).

The concept of audience modelling in this study appears to be connected with the term pluralistic ignorance as well as the phenomenon of social comparison in other studies (e.g., Latené & Darley, 1970; Clark & Word, 1972). Some of the students reasoned that they did not intervene because no one else did. Furthermore, it seems to be reasonable to relate trivialization to pluralistic ignorance. Because the other classmates just walked past Chris and sat down, the whole situation appears to be normal. Moreover, the concept of embarrassment association in this study can be related to the concepts of fear of social blunders and audience inhibition (e.g., Latené & Darley, 1970; Bierhoff, 2002). In the present study expressions of "stage fright" and a fear of being teased or negatively judged by the audience could be discerned. The student imagines how the audience will react and think of him or her, if he or she intervenes and ends up in an embarrassing situation. This shows how the mechanism of audience inhibition can operate among schoolchildren and creates the bystander effect.

The embarrassment association is, however, not only self-oriented. The idea that it must be embarrassing for the victim when others are looking at him can also evoke embarrassment association, i.e., victim-oriented embarrassment association. Therefore, here empathy seems to evoke a prosocial motive (caring for the victim in terms of the victim's embarrassing situation) which in fact appears to inhibit a helping behaviour. Both forms of embarrassment association appear to motivate the student to avoid the whole scene where the critical event is taking place.

Some of the students' curious empathy in this study could be a manifestation of what Hoffman (2000) called empathic distress or what Dovidio et al. (1991) called empathic arousal. According to Hoffman, this empathy reaction functions as a prosocial moral motive. Here, the curious empathy appears to influence David and Robin to go over to Chris and ask a caring question. This finding confirms earlier studies about the relation between empathy and prosocial behaviour among children (see Hoffman, 2000; Eisenberg et al., 2004, 2006).

However, Robin then leaves Chris (responsibility transfer and defining oneself as an unskilled helper seem to take over). Other bystanders who express a curious empathy do not intervene at all. Therefore, curious empathy is not a guarantee for prosocial behaviour. Besides curious empathy, another motive in David's statements is also found: the norm of caring. This could be interpreted as a manifestation of the social responsibility norm (e.g., Eisenberg & Mussen, 1997) as well as the altruistic norm (e.g., Horowitz, 1971).

As mentioned earlier in this paper, however, many factors can inhibit or overrule motives for acting prosocially. One cluster of them is egoistic motives (Dovidio et al., 1991; Hoffman, 2000). Busy working priority seems to be an example of egoistic motives. Self-oriented embarrassment association, such as fear of audience teasing and a fear of negative audience opinions, can also be interpreted as egoistic motives: it is more important not to lose face than to help someone in need. These results can be compared to earlier findings of decreases in helping as a function of higher personal costs for helping (see Dovidio et al., 1991). Another cluster of inhibiting factors are conflicting attitudes, social norms or other moral ideas (Milgram, 1974; Gaertner, 1975; Thornberg, 2006a,b). Compliance with a competitive norm in this study is an example: some students attach great importance to a social norm (the norm of silence and order in the classroom in this case) which is in conflict with an intervention or helping behaviour in the situation. Audience modelling is another example, because the students here interpret a social norm of non-intervention by looking at the other bystanders in the situation ("no one else did anything, so I didn't think about it"). Group processes and social influence form a third cluster of factors that can inhibit prosocial behaviour (see e.g.

Latené & Darley, 1970; Milgram, 1974; Bandura, 2002; Zimbardo, 2004; Hogg & Vaughan, 2005; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Thornberg, 2006a), and this study indicates examples of such factors (e.g., the social influence of the audience, social roles, etc.). Finally, a lack of skills or competence could also be a factor that inhibits prosocial behaviour (cf., Rigby & Johnson, 2006). In the present study, Robin seems to verbalise this by defining himself as an unskilled helper. Whether David's sympathy company is a result of competent behavior or a lack of competence could be discussed.

10.1. IMPLICATIONS FOR VALUES EDUCATION
This study indicates that values or moral education should not merely be reduced to teaching competence in moral thinking. Morality is not just a matter of intellectual work (e.g., solving hypothetical moral dilemmas in classroom discussions). Values or moral education should include and consider thinking, emotions, motives and actions in real-life situations. Furthermore, the study in this article indicates that moral education theories and practices also have to consider the social psychological aspects of moral life (cf., Latené & Darley, 1970; Bandura, 2002; Zimbardo, 2004; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Thornberg, 2006a,b). Social or group processes influence how people reason, feel and act on moral issues in social interactions. This study shows how some schoolchildren reason about not helping a classmate in an emergency when there are other schoolchildren witnessing the situation. Relations to the victim, social roles, norms, and the presence and behaviour of other bystanders seem to affect the way students interpret and act in the situation.

In the light of Rutkowski et al.'s (1983) study, it is remarkable that the bystander effect in the present study emerged in the classroom. Rutkowski et al.'s study indicates that high cohesiveness among the group of bystanders together with a salient social-responsibility norm among them increase the likelihood of bystander helping. Does this mean that the cohesiveness in this school class was low and/or that a social-responsibility norm was not salient? A "sense of community" in the classroom normally correlates with the frequency of prosocial behaviour among the students, and with moral development (for a review see Solomon et al., 2001). Furthermore, a norm of altruism can actually increase the likelihood of helping the victim when there is more than one bystander present, if the norm is shared by the bystanders (Horowitz, 1971). In a study of Staub (1970), helping behaviour actually increased among children when they were in pairs compared to when they were alone as bystanders – their active reactions result in social facilitation, compared to social inhibition as an effect of passive behaviour. Hence, values education has to work with a sense of community as well as with implementing and strengthening a norm of social responsibility and a norm of altruism among the students in order to minimise the risk of bystander effects. Social influence and group processes among schoolchildren play a significant role in their social and moral behaviour. The study shows that the peer group seems to have an important influence on the social processes of the situation. Thus, not only the teacher influences students in their socialisation during the school. Peers also play a significant role in this matter (cf., Corsaro, 1997). Hence, these bystander situations are learning opportunities in moral behaviour, and therefore relevant for teachers to incorporate in deliberative moral education.

Furthermore, the set of classroom rules and the role difference between students and the teacher seem to influence students' definition of a situation and hence inhibit informal social interactions or so-called off-task behaviour among students, including helping behaviour if a classmate is in distress. Thus, at least some students here are confronted with a moral conflict between (a) complying with the teacher and the classroom rules on the one hand, and (b)

acting prosocially and helping other students in need on the other hand. This could be compared with Thornberg's (2006b) study that demonstrates a similar moral dilemma in which the classroom rules of silence and the teachers' indiscriminate hushing collide with students' concerns about helping a classmate who has problems in understanding or carrying out a task during individual seatwork. Moreover, teachers have to reflect upon their own role and how they encourage or discourage students to help or act prosocially in real-life situations when peers are in distress (cf., Caplan & Hay, 1989).

In sum, this study shows how empathy, relations to the victim, students' definition of a situation, social roles of oneself and others, the perceived importance of social norms, and the presence and behaviour of other bystanders seem to affect the way students act in an emergency situation. Teachers who want their students to act in a more prosocial or helping way have to cope with all these aspects.

In the light of the results in this case study, it appears reasonable to argue that the school should educate and help the students to develop moral sensitivity (to avoid trivialisation), empathy,moral responsibility (to avoid dissociation, audience modelling and responsibility transfer), and moral character as well as a competent repertoire of prosocial or moral actions (to avoid "stage fright" or non-intervention as a result of embarrassment association).

This study is just the beginning of a research project. It is obvious that the analysis has raised more questions than answers. More observations of bystander effects should be conducted, and interviews should be made with students who intervene as well as with students who do not intervene. It would also be of value to observe emergency situations without any bystander effects, and to further interview the students who do intervene. Which similarities and differences would be detected in all these events, and in the way students reason about them?

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