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The purpose of this study was to investigate and generate a grounded theory on how and why students behave as they do in school situations in which they witness another student in distress. Fieldwork and interviews were conducted in 2 Swedish elementary schools and guided by a grounded theory approach. The study resulted in a grounded theory of moral frames in bystander situations in school. In this study, 5 main moral frames of school have been identified: (*a*) the moral construction of the good student, (*b*) institutionalized moral disengagement, (*c*) tribe caring, (*d*) gentle caring-girl morality, and (*e*) social-hierarchy-dependent morality. The study highlights how moral action is generally inhibited by the conformity fostered in school settings and by moral dilemmas constructed by the moral frames. A revised model of bystander behavior adapted to the school context is also presented.

The current study concerns itself with prosocial behavior as well as the lack of such behavior in bystander situations in school settings. The term bystander situations refers to situations in which individuals witness another person in distress. Prosocial behavior in turn refers to "voluntary behavior intended to benefit another" (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006, p. 646), such as caring for, helping, comforting, or protecting others.

Bystander Effect

The body of research on bystander situations (for a short review, see Thornberg, 2007, pp. 8–9; for a classic review, see Latané & Nida, 1981) has shown that bystanders more often fail or are slower to help a victim in an emergency situation when there are other bystanders present than when there are no bystanders. This phenomenon is known as the bystander effect and has been tested and replicated in a variety of experimental situations such as falls, theft, smoke-filled rooms, crashes, asthma attacks, and fainting. Only a few studies have involved children as bystanders and been conducted in preschool or school settings. Whereas Caplan and Hay (1989) found bystander effects among children in a natural setting, Straub (1970) found an increase of helping behavior among children within an experimental setting when they were in pairs compared to when they were alone as bystanders. These contrasting results highlight this issue's complexity as well as raise methodological questions.

Different processes have been suggested as contributors to the bystander effect. Pluralistic ignorance refers to a social process in which each individual looks at one another for clues as how to behave before concluding that the situation is not a real emergency because the other individuals are not attempting to help the distressed individual (Bierhoff, 2002; Darley, Teger, & Lewis, 1973; Latané & Darley, 1970). The mere presence of bystanders can inhibit a witness from intervening in an emergency situation because he or she is afraid of looking foolish or behaving in an embarrassing manner in front of others. The aforementioned anxiety is sometimes referred to as a fear of social blunders, while the social influence is known as audience inhibition (Bierhoff, 2002; Hogg & Vaughan, 2008).

When several bystanders are present, the pressure to intervene or help does not fall on any one particular individual. Thus, the responsibility to help is shared by all bystanders, and, as a result, each person may be less likely to intervene. This phenomenon is known as the diffusion of responsibility (Latané & Darley, 1970). Certain social norms, such as the social responsibility norm (Rutkowski, Gruder, & Romer, 1983) or the altruistic norm (Horowitz, 1971), among bystanders seem to counteract or reduce the bystander effect and instead in-

crease the likelihood of helping behavior. Social roles that indicate subject competence, such as being a nurse or a doctor (Cramer, McMaster, Bartell, & Dragna, 1988), or a generalized responsibility, such as leadership roles (Baumeister, Chesner, Senders, & Tice, 1988), may also increase the likelihood of helping behavior.

More recently, observational studies investigating bullying episodes on school playgrounds show that when students witness bullying they seldom intervene (Craig & Pepler, 1997; Craig, Pepler, & Atlas, 2000; O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999). Other studies show that students as bystanders in bullying situations can take on different social roles, but still seldom assist the victim (see Salmivalli, 1999). Moreover, helping behavior among children can be inhibited by teacher comments and classroom rules (Thornberg, 2006). In a case study during which peers witnessed a silently crying classmate lying on the floor in the classroom, the children articulated different reasons for not helping that indicated processes such as trivialization, dissociation, embarrassment association, audience modeling, and responsibility transfer (Thornberg, 2007).

Theories of Bystander Situation and Moral Behavior

The current study addresses how children behave as bystanders in school settings. This section presents well-known theories of bystander behavior and discusses cognitive theories of moral development.

Hoffman's (2000) theory of moral development identifies five types of moral encounters that children face throughout childhood and adolescence. One of the five moral encounters is associated with being a witness in a bystander situation, which Hoffman labeled the innocent bystander. The innocent bystander witnesses someone in distress or pain and is faced with the moral question: Should I help, and how do I feel if I don't help? According to Hoffman (2000), bystander situations arouse empathic distress, which acts as a prosocial motive by being transformed into feelings such as sympathy, compassion, guilt, empathy-driven anger, or feelings of injustice. The relation of empathy and prosocial behavior has been found among children in several studies (for reviews, see Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Sadovsky, 2006; Eisenberg, Valiente, & Champion, 2004; Hoffman, 2000).

Latané and Darley's (1970) decision model of bystander intervention proposes that whether or not a bystander helps depends on the outcomes of five decision making steps in which the bystander must (a) notice that something is wrong (that there is an event in which helping may be required), (b) define the event as an emergency and thus interpret a need for help, (c) decide whether to take personal responsibility (Does the victim "deserve" help and is it my responsibility to help?), (d) decide how to intervene, and (e) implement the chosen intervention. The overall decision of whether to help or not is dependent on the answers to the aforementioned questions.

According to the arousal: cost-reward model of bystander intervention (Dovidio, Piliavin, Gaertner, Schroeder, & Clark, 1991; Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, & Penner, 2006), which assumes an economic view of human behavior, individuals are motivated to maximize their rewards and minimize their costs. Furthermore, the model claims that observers of an emergency are physiologically aroused and that this empathic arousal is unpleasant, which in turn motivates them to help the victim in order to reduce this aversive arousal. In a bystander situation, the bystanders analyze and compare the probable costs of (e.g., danger or potential personal harm, effort, lost time, embarrassment, social disapproval, stigma of being associated with the victim, and disruption of ongoing activities) and rewards for (e.g., good reputation, popularity, friendship, an expectation that there will be social benefits to the helper, and relief of the aversive arousal) helping as well as the probable costs of (e.g., experience of aversive arousal, guilt, blame, self-blame, criticism, and social disapproval) and rewards for (e.g., social approval from those who think the victim deserves his or her distress) not helping (a so-

called cost-reward analysis) before making a decision according to what action they think will best serve them.

Because research on prosocial behavior in bystander situations has traditionally been carried out in laboratories and artificial settings, it has been criticized for lacking ecological validity, thereby calling into question whether these studies' results are relevant and can be generalized to individuals' natural social settings. Therefore, the current study has been carried out in the participants' real-life setting with the help of ethnographic and grounded theory (GT) methods in order to test and elaborate on, or perhaps challenge, findings from earlier research.

Research on the bystander situation and bystander effect among children in preschool and school contexts is rare (for exceptions, see Caplan & Hay, 1989; Staub, 1970; Thornberg, 2007). Although more recent research on the bystander effect in schoolchildren has been carried out, it has been restricted to bullying (excluding other forms of peer-in-distress situations in school settings).

Moreover, current theories on bystander behavior mainly focus on individual cognitive processes in which reasoning, decision making, arousal, and affects play significant roles (e.g., Dovidio et al., 1991, 2006; Hoffman, 2000; Latané & Darley, 1970). In addition, there are numerous theories of moral development, such as Kohlberg's (1969, 1984) classic theory of cognitive development of moral reasoning, the social cognitive domain theory (Nucci, 2001; Turiel, 1983), and neo- or post-Kohlbergian approaches built on modern cognitive sciences (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Lapsley & Power, 2005; Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999). Common to these theories is a focus on children's morality in terms of cognition, which of course provides critical information about morality and prosocial as well as nonhelping behaviors among children.

Nevertheless, by investigating contextual and social interaction aspects rather than cognitive aspects of children's morality, the current study can potentially contribute to the current literature by complementing individual-oriented perspectives with social-interactionist and contextual perspectives. The present research investigates children's morality as it occurs in their social interactions and real-life settings and by considering morality as something that is not confined to individual cognitions but instead constructed and developed in everyday social interactions and particular contexts. A context-specific theory of bystander behavior among children at school has not yet been developed. Current bystander situation and moral behavior theories overlook the school context and culture. Therefore, it is important to undertake field studies in school settings in order to explore why students act as they do in bystander situations at school, thereby taking into consideration the role of the school context and culture.

This article's purpose is to investigate and generate a GT on how and why students behave as they do in school situations in which they witness another student in distress By adopting an ethnographic and GT method, this study extends the current body of knowledge to bystander situations.

Method

A Grounded Theory Approach

The study presented in this article is a part of a larger ethnographic research project about morality, values, and norms in everyday life in two elementary schools. I adopted a GT approach because of its focus on interaction, meaning, and social processes (for an excellent argument for using GT in ethnography, see Charmaz, 2006, pp. 21–25). The aim of the GT methodology is to generate and interrelate concepts to develop a theory based on the empirical data (Glaser, 1978). Furthermore, in accordance with a GT approach, I constantly moved

between data collection and analysis during the study by using theoretical sampling, which Glaser and Strauss (1967) define as "the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes his data and then decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges" (p. 45).

I used the constructivist version of GT (Charmaz, 2006; Thornberg & Charmaz, in press) as an overriding guiding principle, assuming that neither data nor theories are discovered, but rather, constructed by me as a result of my interactions with the field and its participants. I coded the data in the following three phases: initial coding, focused coding, and theoretical coding.

During the initial coding (i.e., open coding) I tried to remain open to exploring whatever theoretical possibilities I could discern in the data. Coding during this phase involved "naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 43). I developed codes by constantly comparing data with data, data with codes, and codes with codes. During initial coding I was guided by an array of analytical questions (see Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978), including: What is happening in the data? What is going on? What is the basic problem(s) or main concern(s) faced by the participants in the action scene? What do the data suggest? What category does this incident indicate?

During the focused coding I used the most significant and frequent initial codes to sift through the large amounts of data. The focused codes I generated in this phase were now more selective and conceptual than the initial codes. Hence, the focused codes condensed the data. Data collection, coding, and analysis were guided by these focused codes.

During the theoretical coding phase I conceptualized how the codes might be related to each other and integrated with the help of my own knowledge base of theoretical coding families. The term coding families refers to different sets of underlying logics or patterns embedded in preexisting theories in many areas. Examples of coding families are causal-consequence models, basic social process, dimensions, types, strategies, interaction patterns, cutting points, mean-goal models, culture, mainline, and so on (for further reading, see Glaser, 1978, 1998, 2005). The three coding phases were not a strictly linear process. Instead I flexibly moved back and forth between them. However, more of the initial coding occurred during the beginning of the research process and more of the theoretical coding occurred during the end of the investigation.

In contrast to the classic GT approach (Glaser, 1978, 1998, 2005; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), but in keeping with the constructivist GT approach (Thornberg & Charmaz, in press), I also took advantage of preexisting theories and research findings in the substantive field in a sensitive, creative, and flexible manner. Such preexisting concepts were not uncritically adopted in the analysis, but instead treated as flexible, modifiable sensitizing concepts and a source of seeing, imagining, and inspiration, which I judged in terms of their relevance, fit, and utility. In short, I used an open mind, not an empty head (Dey, 1993). Hence, extant theoretical concepts and ideas from literature in the substantive field earned their way into the GT in the same way as Glaser, (1978, 1998, 2005) argues that theoretical codes must earn their way in. In short, they had to work and fit with the data as well as the theory I was developing.

Settings, Participants, and Fieldwork

I conducted fieldwork from October 2002 to May 2003 in the first school and from November 2003 to May 2004 in the second school. The schools were located in different neighborhoods in a Swedish town with more than 130,000 inhabitants. The sample represented students from working class and middle-class families. Two preschool, two second-grade, and two fifth grade classes participated in the study (one class at each grade level from each school). In total, 141 students (between 6 and 11 years old) from six classrooms participated

along with 13 teachers.

Twenty-six instances of bystander situations occurring among the students were documented by ethnographic observations (field notes and in some cases audio recordings). I also conducted 132 individual follow-up conversations with students involved as bystanders. In total, 76 (40 girls and 36 boys) of the 141 students participated at least once in these informal conversations. Examples of the questions that I usually asked in these conversations were: What happened? What did you think when you saw . . . ? How come no one did anything to help her/him? How come you helped/didn't help her or him? In addition, I conducted informal conversations with those teachers who were involved in situations in which their students witnessed a distressed peer.

I investigated situations in which students were in higher levels of distress (e.g., crying, victims of harassment or aggression) as well as lower levels of distress (e.g., unable to find his or her toy, asking a classmate for help in a math task during desk work). I also investigated situations in which other students acted as passive bystanders as well as situations in which they acted as helpers. I collected, compared, and analyzed these differences by using theoretical sampling and the flip-flop technique. The flip-flop technique helped me elaborate my concepts by looking at examples in the data that were contrary to my original concepts in order to gain different perspectives on the events and the interaction patterns (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For instance, I compared passive bystander behavior with helping behavior, and high status students' and low-status students' behaviors as a result of my ongoing coding and analysis.

In addition, by carrying out day-to-day fieldwork, I also studied many other bystander situations beyond the 26 I coded, but did not systematically follow them up with informal conversations. I also studied school and student cultures, group processes, social structures, interaction patterns, norms, and values embedded and manifested in everyday school life. Furthermore, I conducted qualitative group interviews with 139 students (in total; 49 groups with two to four students in each group) in order to examine how students generally reasoned and made sense of school rules, peer relations, and teachers' discipline and values education practices.

Many childhood researchers and school ethnographers emphasize the value of assuming an atypical, less power-oriented adult research role. I consciously worked on field relations and adult-child power issues by assuming a "least-adult role" (Mandell, 1991; Mayall, 2008) or "out-of-the-ordinary adults" (Tammivaara & Enright, 1986) role. Similar to Thorne's (1993) child-friendly field relation work, I avoided positions of authority and went through the day-to-day school life with or near the students. I also told the students at the beginning of the fieldwork that I 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 current student in school.

After the empirical fieldwork, theoretical sampling was still used during the final analyses to reanalyze the collected data until all relevant categories and their relations were saturated and a GT was completed. Hence, the analyses took place both during and after the fieldwork.

The Grounded Theory of Moral Frames in Bystander Situations in School

According to my ethnographic fieldwork in the two aforementioned elementary schools, students encountered situations on a weekly basis in which they witnessed a peer in need or distress. Examples of such distress included a peer who was injured during a game or while playing; a crying peer; students harassing a younger, weaker, or special needs student; bullying; a teasing incident; a peer who looked upset; a child asking another classmate for help in the classroom; a peer who had trouble finding his or her property; a fight; and similar situations. These types of situations raise important questions. What happened in these situations?

How did students who were bystanders react and act in these situations? How could their behavior be understood and explained? What was the witnessing student's main concern?

The school culture and everyday social interactions among students in my study appeared to construct moral frames that influenced or guided the students' behavior in bystander situations. The moral frames in school refer to the social constructions of morality created and maintained in the school setting. The students used these moral frames to make sense of bystander situations. In this study, five main moral frames of school have been identified: (*a*) the moral construction of the good student, (*b*) institutionalized moral disengagement, (*c*) tribe caring, (*d*) gentle caring-girl morality, and (*e*) social-hierarchy-dependent morality. Although there were some differences between the two schools' contexts (e.g., physical and verbal aggression was more frequent in the school in which working-class students were more highly represented compared to the school in which middle-class students were more highly represented), the five moral frames were expressed in bystander behavior in both schools as well as across the different grade levels.

The Moral Construction of the Good Student

According to the analysis of school rules and their everyday practice, the rule system expressed and mediated to the students (as an ongoing informal curriculum) is that of the moral construction of the good student. This good-student moral construction actually included two ideal types: (*a*) the benevolent fellow buddy, who complies with the school rules, which could be labeled "relational rules" (Thornberg, 2008) such as being nice and friendly to others and not bullying, fighting, or teasing, and (*b*) the wellbehaved student, who obeys teachers and all the school rules such as classroom rules or rules about clothing, using correct language, manners in the cafeteria, and proper movement in the hallways. The following excerpt comes from a focus group consisting of four female, fifth-grade students and demonstrates how the good-student construction consists of the aforementioned subconstructions, the benevolent buddy fellow and the well-behaved student:

> Maria: A good student is a student who does what the teacher asks her to do and doesn't break the rules in school.
> Lina: Who doesn't tease other kids, doesn't bully other kids, doesn't talk in the class and follows all the rules.
> Maria: Doesn't disturb the teacher or her classmates. She is nice.
> Lina: Yeah, respects others, is helpful. Does as she's told.
> Johanna: A good student has to follow all the school rules.
> (Focus group with four female students in grade 5)

In contrast, some students explained to me that a "bad student" was a student who bullied others, had fights, and did or said mean things to others (i.e., broke relational rules) as well as a student who disobeyed school rules, was disruptive in the classroom, or did not listen to the teacher (i.e., broke school and classroom rules in general). The moral construction of the good student could be associated with the process of socialization into rules and routines in school that Sherman (1996) labels "studentizing," in which compliance with authority, rules, timekeeping, and routines ensures the students' inclusion as students in the school world as a preparation for the world of work (for a deeper analysis of the moral construction of the good student, see Thornberg, 2009). In line with this moral frame, when teachers talked about personal responsibility to their students, it was most often related to schoolwork, obeying teachers' instructions, and following school rules. For example, in one of the classrooms, some of the students were involved in off-task behaviors that disturbed other students who were working. The teacher turned to the off-task students and firmly told them, "You have to take responsibility for what you say and do in the classroom. I can't always remind you of all the

do's and dont's. You have to think for yourself. You must think about not talking, not running around. You have to think about our rules and follow them by yourself" (field note taken in a second-grade classroom). The teacher linked student responsibility to school rules internalization and obedience. In Habermas's (1987) terms, students' lifeworld, including their morals (taking personal responsibility and considering what is right vs. wrong and acting accordingly), had become "colonized" by the school system. However, in the school in which working-class students were the majority student population, there was greater resistance to the moral construction of the good student among the students (especially boys in the second and fifth grades) by breaking school rules than among the students in the other school (i.e., the school in which middle-class students were the majority student population).

According to the moral construction of the good student, the students should always be nice, kind, and helpful to each other, which in turn should guide them to act as helpers in bystander situations (the benevolent fellow buddy). However, relational rules were in conflict with other school rules in several bystander situations, which in turn created moral dilemmas among students and counteracted helping behaviors. The moral disengagement effect of school rules is a generated category that refers to the process that occurred in bystander situations when the aforementioned nonrelational school rules conflicted with and overruled relational school rules and other helping motives such as empathy or earlier internalized prosocial norms. In these instances the moral frame of the moral construction of the good student produced institutionalized moral disengagement, the second identified moral frame that this article discusses.

Institutionalized Moral Disengagement

When I asked students whom I had observed helping a peer in need why they had helped or intervened, the typical motives they reported were (*a*) empathy (e.g., "I felt sorry for him"), (*b*) anger toward the transgressor (e.g., "I became angry when I saw what they did to her"), (*c*) a feeling of duty or social norm (e.g., "You should help," "Because you should be a good person"), and (*d*) friend loyalty (e.g., "He's my friend"). These sorts of motives constructed a sense of personal responsibility to help among those students who helped a peer in need.

Nevertheless, in many of the bystander situations that I observed, students as bystanders seemed to find themselves in a moral dilemma in which such helping motives were in conflict with, or counteracted by, different school rules. For example, I noticed incidents on the playground at the end of recess in which students asked other students for help finding personal property, were alone and crying, or harassed by a peer, but did not receive any help or support from witnessing peers. Instead of helping the distressed individual, these bystanders left the playground as they usually did when recess was over. When I asked the witnessing students about the situation in question, many of them had noticed the distressed peer, but told me that they had to return to class on time and that they were not allowed to stay on the playground when recess ended. If the students didn't follow this formal rule, they risked being reprimanded by the teacher, an expectation reported by many of the students. One of the students with whom I spoke about an outdoor incident in which a classmate had lost one of his gloves explained that "I didn't stay and help him because the recess was over. We are not allowed to be outdoors when the lessons begin. My teacher will give me a telling off if I come late to the classroom" (a boy in second grade).

A similar example was to ignore a classmate asking for help or to stop helping a classmate when the teacher hushed the class during desk work because of the rule against talking during desk work. This lack of caring or helping among students was a prevalent pattern built upon school rules and everyday teacher-student interactions and was therefore a socially constructed moral frame in school. This institutionalized moral disengagement demoralized students into becoming passive bystanders in many bystander situations because of the process

Milgram (1974) refers to as the focus shift in responsibility and morality, during which the individual feels a sense of responsibility toward the authority in terms of how diligently the individual performs the actions the authority requires of him or her, instead of feeling responsible for the content of the actions that the authority prescribed and its consequences for other people (see also Bauman, 1993). In the present study, the authority was of course the teachers and their rules. Their message to the students, manifested in everyday interaction patterns, was to obey authority figures rather than act upon what the students believed was the right thing to do.

Hence, the passive bystander behavior in these situations expressed an egoistic retreat in terms of not helping a distressed person in order to avoid getting in trouble (compare with Thornberg, 2006). However, sometimes students who found themselves in this moral dilemma actually defied the school system (i.e., teacher authority, school rules) in order to help the distressed individual, and thus staged a sort of moral resistance during which they had to go behind the teachers' backs in order to act according to their own moral standard or helping motives (compare with Thornberg, 2006). In other words, moral resistance in this situation involved the students doing what they believed was right instead of doing what their teachers (i.e., the authorities) told the students to do. The girls in the following excerpt provide an example of how they sometimes enacted covert moral resistance in the classroom.

Anna: If she [the teacher] says "shhhh" like this, if someone is helping someone
           else then it all goes quiet. After a while everyone starts chatting again.
Jennie: And after a while it gets louder and louder.
Johanna: And then you can go on helping.
(Focus group with three female students in grade 5)

By engaging in covert resistance, the students lowered the risk of getting in trouble, compared to when students openly challenged school rules and teacher authority. It is important to note that if teachers were nearby when a student was upset and crying, in a physical fight, or being harassed by others, these teachers were the ones who intervened in the situation or comforted the student. During these situations the teachers did not appear concerned with how to encourage or teach witnessing students to help or intervene. In fact, according to my ethnographic observations, the teachers did nothing to encourage student bystanders to respond to the distress of others during the situations in question. Sometimes teachers actually told student bystanders to leave or not interfere. Thus the interaction pattern that took place between the intervening teacher and the non-intervening students in a lot of bystander situations mediated to the students that the teacher had a social role as the leader and the main helper, while the students had non-helper roles. After observing a bystander situation in which a student was lying on the classroom floor with a flushed face expressing pain and crying very quietly, I talked to some of his classmates who had observed him:

RT: 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 its Margot
           [the teacher] who goes over to him and asks what has happened.
(Informal conversation with a female student in grade 5)

Sandra's explanation clearly demonstrates that she attributed the helper role in the classroom to the teacher and not to the students. The students were simply expected to follow the classroom rules and routines of taking their seats after entering the classroom and remain seated. Furthermore, many teachers actually told the students that they should not intervene in fights, peer conflicts, or aggressive situations because this was the responsibility of the teachers and school staff, not the children. The reasons behind such a policy were, according to the

teachers with whom I spoke, to protect intervening students from harm and prevent them from making difficult situations worse: "The children are too young to handle such situations, and they can get hurt themselves. We have to protect them by telling them to come and tell us instead of trying to stop the fight" (a second-grade teacher).

Through their attitudes and behaviors regarding bystander situations, teachers created and maintained a process of devaluating children as active moral agents, which clearly helped produce the institutionalized moral disengagement. The school system, as an institution, conducted a moral takeover and devalued the children as helpers, which in turn seemed to encourage children to devalue themselves as helpers. Devaluing themselves as helpers along with the responsibility transfer to teachers produced a responsibility loss and hence a moral disengagement among students in many bystander situations. The only legitimate intervening option according to the school system when students witnessed violence, conflicts, teasing, or peer harassment was to tell the teacher (to "squeal" in the students' terms), which was in direct conflict with the peer culture's social norms (e.g., "Other kids don't like it if you squeal" [a boy in fifth grade]) and associated with social costs (e.g., "They won't let you play with them if you are a squealer" [a girl in preschool]); "They will attack you if you tell the teacher what they did to him" [a boy in second grade]).

Tribe Caring

The third moral frame used by students in bystander situations is termed tribe caring. In everyday school life, students categorized and related themselves into different types of social groups. The most important groups seemed to be their close friend group consisting of about two to six members (e.g., "We're always together, we like each other, and we look out for each other" [a boy in fifth grade commenting on his close-friend group]). Nevertheless, students also categorized themselves and others in terms of gender (e.g., "I don't play with him because he's a boy" [a girl in second grade]) and by school classroom (e.g., "Why did I bother? Because he's my classmate" [a boy in fifth grade]). When students interacted in their groups of close friends and in other group constellations, they acted like small tribes at school, particularly on the playground.

As tribes, they often acted on their own, more or less detached from the other tribes. Nevertheless, sometimes tribes interacted in terms of cooperation (e.g., playing together), competition (e.g., different teams when playing football during recess), or even conflict (e.g., conflicts over toys or playground areas). A group-confined morality appeared to be fostered among the students, based on this social categorization process and in-group membership. Within the tribes, an ethic of protection was more or less constructed and maintained (e.g., "I care, because they're my friends" [a girl in preschool]; "We protect and help each other because we belong to the same group of friends" [a boy in fifth grade]; "We look out for each other" [a boy in second grade]).

What I call tribe caring (i.e., caring within and confined to the tribe) played a significant role in many bystander situations. A significant latent pattern in bystander situations in the school setting was that students who acted as helpers usually defined the peer in distress as a significant in-group, or tribe, member (a friend, sibling, classmate, or associate; e.g., "Of course I supported him; he's my friend" [a boy in second grade]). In contrast, in several informal follow-up conversations with passive bystanders, not defining the victim as a significant tribe member was used as a reason for not intervening (e.g., "Well, but I'm not his friend" [a boy in fifth grade]).

Therefore, if the peer in need was defined as a non-friend or an out-group member, bystander students tended to dissociate themselves from the victim. A responsibility transfer to the victim's friends or associates often took place (compare with Thornberg, 2007), which in turn constructed a responsibility loss among these bystanders (e.g., "I thought her friends

would do something. They are the ones who should help her, because that's what friends should do" [a boy in fifth grade]; "Why should I help him? I'm not his friend" [a girl in second grade]).

The Gentle Caring-Girl Morality

In line with other research (e.g., Maccoby & Jacklin, 1987; Thorne, 1993), on the playground during recess girls more often played with girls and boys more often played with boys. In these same-sex group interaction patterns, boys and girls identified themselves in a gender-appropriate way and created a sense of opposite sides. In classrooms, corridors, the lunchroom, and especially on the playground, boys and girls emphasized sex differences and opposition between them.

As in Thorne's (1993) ethnographic study, these dichotomous social categories among the children exaggerated gender differences as well as deemphasized variations within and communalities between "the boys" and "the girls." These gender stereotypes created and promoted gender ideals. An ideal boy was a child who was tough, physically strong, good at sports, and unemotional. An ideal girl was a child who was gentle, good-looking, obedient, sensitive, and affectionate. These gender ideals were also used as an explanation among some girls when I asked them about particular bystander behaviors that I had observed (e.g., "Boys don't care as much as we do if a child is crying" [a girl in second grade]; "Boys fight a lot and try to be tough and cool. A bit cruel, I think. Rude. Girls are gentler and nicer. They take care of others if someone gets hurt. Girls are a bit better than boys, I think" [a girl in fifth grade]).

These differences in gender ideals among the children constructed and promoted a specific morality associated with being a girl. Compared to boys, girls were expected to be gentler and more sensitive, empathic, caring, and affectionate. This gentle caring-girl morality, constructed and maintained in the students' day-to-day interactions at school, promoted girls as more sensitive and inclined to help a student in distress as compared to boys. I also observed that girls intervened in bystander situations more frequently than boys.

Nevertheless, my observations also showed many within-gender variations as well as between-gender similarities. For example, there were boys who were gentle and affectionate as well as emotional and girls who were insensitive and rude. There were certain boys who intervened as bystanders much more often than certain girls. Furthermore, in bystander situations in which a student was physically harassed, I noticed that it was almost exclusively boys who intervened with physical aggression in order to stop the perpetrator and help the victim, which of course was more in line with the gender ideals of boys than girls.

Social-Hierarchy-Dependent Morality

As I have already reported, the teachers positioned themselves as the main helpers or interveners in bystander situations while the students frequently assumed the role of the non-competent and non-responsible non-helpers when teachers were present. Hence, the institutionalized moral disengagement could be linked to social hierarchy-dependent morality, which was the fifth moral school frame that influenced students as bystanders. According to this moral frame, moral action in bystander situations was related to social positions within a social hierarchy, in which teachers and other school staff occupied the highest position.

However, my fieldwork also revealed that this moral frame operated as a latent pattern of morality among the students themselves, especially in situations in which many students witnessed a peer being harassed. The students had a clear hierarchical social order based upon school grades and peer status. Within each classroom there was a social system of status among the students. Students with leader roles or high social status more often intervened than students with low social status when several students were present, which indicated how social hierarchy inhibited overt moral actions among witnessing students who were in a low-

status position and at the same time promoted a responsibility transfer to higher-status students. Social-hierarchy-dependent morality is indicated and illustrated in Elin's explanation of why no other girl than Johanna intervened in a situation in which a girl was teased by some boys.

> RT: Why didn't anyone intervene until Johanna opened her mouth and angrily told them to stop teasing Maria?
> Elin: Because these boys don't listen to us, anyway. But they listen to her.
> RT: How come?
> Elin: She is a kind of leader I suppose. And the boys in the class respect her too.
> (Informal conversation with a female student in grade 5)

In situations in which many students were bystanders, morality seemed to be a social privilege, a sort of moral capital used by high-status students to demonstrate, manifest, and maintain their social position and power at the same time as they actually helped the victim. It was striking how moral action generally was inhibited by the conformity fostered in the schools. First, in many situations helping was in conflict with the school rules. Second, in many situations helping was constructed as the teachers' domain, not that of the students. Third, the victim was not a part of the tribe in several situations and therefore did not attract tribe caring. And, finally, most bystanders were not leaders or high-status students and therefore in bystander situations with many peers present, they lacked the social privilege of demonstrating moral action. Hence, the inhibiting process of many moral frames in school involved moral passivity as a result of school and peer cultures keeping students in line, which in turn appeared to informally educate students not to take action to help victims in many situations due to the constructed dictum of not standing out against the social order, norms, expectancy, and hierarchy.

According to follow-up conversations, and in line with the moral frame of social-hierarchy-dependent morality, many low- and middle-status students explained that they did not intervene in a lot of bystander situations because they were afraid of the social costs. They talked about the risk of looking foolish or behaving in an embarrassing way in front of other students, which could be associated with the concept of fear of social blunders from the bystander-effect literature (e.g., Bierhoff, 2002; Hogg & Vaughan, 2008). In addition, the students also expressed a fear of more severe social costs (i.e., a fear of social sanctions) such as being teased, harassed, humiliated, victimized, excluded, or punished in some other way if they intervened. In the following excerpt Julia expressed a fear of both social blunders and social sanctions when asked about why she did not help a distressed peer:

> RT: What did you want to do when you saw him?
> Julia: I don't know. There were so many other people there, who were looking on. It would have been embarrassing to go over to him and comfort him or something.
> RT: What do you mean?
> Julia: Well, somebody might start teasing me, and think that I'm in love with him or something like that.
> (Informal conversation with a female student in grade 5)

Julia had quite a low status in the class, and helping a boy would also violate the moral frame of tribe caring applied to gender. As the above excerpt illustrated, the well-known social phenomenon of audience inhibition (Bierhoff, 2002; Hogg & Vaughan, 2008) often appeared to influence low-status students when a crowd of witnessing students was nearby. This phenomenon did not usually affect leader or high-status students as their authority and power

to intervene were taken for granted in the peer culture.

Such socially powerful students rarely took embarrassment or social sanctions into consideration (even if they appeared to consider other costs that might inhibit them from helping in the actual situation). According to how they typically reasoned during informal conversations, they simply helped if they thought or felt that this was the right thing to do and if they were motivated to act along those lines. Thus, the group structures or social hierarchies among students were powerful factors in controlling and fostering student behavior in bystander situations. It should be noted that when high-status students initiated intervention in bystander situations, other students might follow their example, especially if they belonged to the same tribe.

Theory Development and Integration: A Revised Model of Bystander Behavior Adapted to School Context

Sometimes the GT approach is criticized for building small islands of theory in isolation (i.e., developing small theories in isolation from the existing body of knowledge), which is a risk of noncumulative theory development and "introvert theorizing" (for a discussion, see Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2003; also see Morse, 2001). Nevertheless, according to Strauss and Corbin (1998) the GT approach can, in addition to developing a GT, also be used to elaborate and extend existing theories. I have achieved such theory development and integration by constantly comparing my data, codes, and GT with preexisting theories and research.

According to my ethnographic fieldwork, individual students operated with one or more moral frames across multiple bystander situations as a result of being a part of the school culture and participating in everyday interactions with teachers and peers. However, the degree to which these moral frames guided or influenced students' behavior in bystander situations depended on the social processes in the actual bystander situation and how they interpreted and cognitively processed this social information.

Grounded in the current study's data, my GT of moral frames in bystander situations at school, and extant theories and research, I have developed and integrated a revised model of bystander behavior adapted to the school context. My revised model highlights the following seven critical procedures among student bystanders: (*1*) noticing something is wrong, (*2*) interpreting the need for help in the situation, (*3*) experiencing a degree of empathic arousal and empathy-driven emotions, (*4*) facing the contextual moral frames, (*5*) scanning for social status and relations in the situation, (*6*) condensing motives for action, and (*7*) acting in the situation.

1. Noticing Something Is Wrong

The first and second procedures in the revised model of bystander behavior adapted to the school context are in accordance with Latané and Darley's (1970) decision model of bystander intervention. Their statement that "a person pays only selective attention to his environment" (p. 32) is well documented and confirmed in modern cognitive science (e.g., Fiske & Taylor, 2008, pp. 216–219; Reisberg, 2007, pp. 102–137; Steinberg, 2003, pp. 91–100). The data in my study indicate that one reason why students sometimes did not help a peer in distress was that they simply had not noticed that something was wrong.

There are examples in the data in which nonhelping students reported that they did not notice any distress or emergency in a particular situation (e.g., "I was in a hurry and didn't see what was happening" [a boy in fifth grade]; "Oh, I didn't see her" [a girl in second grade]). Being in a hurry, and thus running or walking fast while focusing on arriving back at the classroom on time, was a typical reason for missing an incident. I have also found examples in which students missed what was going on because of poor visibility. They did not see anything because other students blocked their view of the incident (e.g., "I didn't see what they

were doing because there were a lot of children in front of them" [a boy in second grade]). If nearby students did not notice that something was wrong, they actually had no reason to intervene in the situation. Only if they noticed the incident, might they take action.

2. Interpreting a Need for Help in the Situation

Once the incident is noticed, the bystander has to define or interpret whether or not there is a need to help in the situation (Latané & Darley, 1970). In many bystander situations, students did not perceive any need for help on the part of the distressed student and therefore did not take action (e.g., "I thought they were just playing" [a girl in second grade]). Furthermore, I found examples of nonintervening students who actually witnessed a student in severe distress—such as being a victim of peer harassment or having hurt him- or herself so badly that he or she was crying—but in follow-up conversations they gave responses such as "I didn't think it was anything really serious . . . he's often down on the floor" (a girl in fifth grade) and "They didn't mean it really; they were just joking with him" (a boy in second grade). Hence, in bystander situations, students might trivialize the critical event as being insignificant and ordinary instead of something seriously wrong (Thornberg, 2007). If the students witnessed a peer in distress but did not interpret it as distress, or at least convinced themselves that nothing was wrong, they could avoid any conflict over whether they should help or not (see Latané & Darley, 1970).

In the data I have a few examples that indicate that the witnessing children made social comparisons with each other and actually interpreted the situation as nothing was wrong as a result of pluralistic ignorance (Bierhoff, 2002; Darley et al., 1973; Latané & Darley, 1970). In other words, bystanders who looked around to see how others were responding, and found that no one else was behaving as if the situation was serious, therefore inferred that the situation was not serious and did not require any intervention on their part. In the previously mentioned bystander situation in which a student was lying on the classroom floor with a red face expressing pain and crying very quietly, a bystander who had passed the boy without intervening told me, "No one else seemed to react. Everyone just carried on as usual. So I didn't think it was anything serious" (a girl in fifth grade). If witnessing students did not interpret something as wrong, they actually had no reason to intervene in the situation. Thus, students might intervene only if they interpreted a need for help in the situation.

3. Experiencing a Degree of Empathic Arousal and Empathy-Driven Emotions

The role of empathy is rather overlooked in Latané and Darley's (1970) decision model of bystander intervention. Empathy appeared to be a common motive for helping in a bystander situation among the students I observed. Furthermore, the degree of empathic arousal and empathy-driven emotions reported by students seemed to be related to the level of distress perceived in the situation.

Students who were bystanders in situations in which a peer was in more serious distress, such as crying or being a victim of harassment, more often reported a high degree of empathic arousal and empathy-driven emotions such as sympathy for the peer or anger directed toward the perpetrator (compare with Hoffman, 2000) as the motives for helping (or at least these were feelings they experienced in the situation), compared to when students were bystanders in situations in which a peer experienced a lower level of distress (such as asking for help to solve a math task during desk work). A high-status boy whom I watched intervene after some classmates threw snowballs at a lower-grade student and the other bystanders from his class remained passive explained to me afterwards why he had helped the younger student.

RT: How come you helped him?
Kevin: I was really annoyed when I saw them throwing snowballs at him. The

poor little kid hadn't done anything. And he started crying, but they
didn't stop.

RT: They didn't?

Kevin: I saw that he was terrified. I felt sorry for him.

RT: You did?

Kevin: Yeah, and mad at them. So I told them to stop.

(Informal conversation with a boy in grade 5)

Kevin was really touched by the situation and the victim's distress. He empathized with the victim and also experienced empathy-driven anger. The role of empathy and empathy-driven emotions in bystander situations could easily be associated with Hoffman's (2000) theory of moral development and its core concept, empathy distress. Research has shown that when people witness someone in discomfort, pain, or danger, they typically experience empathic distress or arousal (Dovidio et al., 2006; Hoffman, 2000). According to Hoffman (2000), empathic distress functions as a prosocial moral motive by being transformed into feelings such as sympathy, compassion, guilt, or empathy-driven anger. The students' empathy expressed in the current study could also be compared with the arousal: cost-reward model, which claims that some bystander situations may create a high empathic arousal that may be so aversive for the bystander that it motivates him or her to help in order to reduce this aversive arousal (Dovidio et al., 1991, 2006). Moreover, the relation between empathy and prosocial behavior has actually been found in several studies (see Eisenberg et al., 2004; Eisenberg, Spinrad, et al., 2006).

Nevertheless, as Hoffman (2000) concludes, depending on how bystanders interpret and attribute the bystander situation, "their empathic distress may be reduced, neutralized, or transformed into other empathic affects" (p. 93). Hence, empathic arousal may, but does not automatically, lead to helping or prosocial behavior. My findings indicated that moral frames in school as well as social processes in the situation may reduce or overrule empathy.

In line with the gender ideals and the moral frame of gentle caring-girl morality in school, follow-up conversations with students who had been bystanders indicated that girls more often than boys expressed empathy and empathy-driven emotions (e.g., "I really felt sorry for him. I didn't understand why his friends didn't do anything" [a girl in second grade]; "I became a bit upset when I saw that she was crying" [a girl in preschool]) and more often expressed gentle care in the situation (e.g., comforting, speaking in a caring way, and affectionate behavior).

Nevertheless, this gender pattern refers to a group tendency, not an absolute contrast. I observed many boys who clearly expressed empathy and care, as well as girls who expressed insensitivity and lack of care in bystander situations. In addition, I observed girls (especially low-status girls) who reported a high level of empathy and empathy-driven emotions, but in the actual bystander situation often remained passive or nonhelping.

4. Facing Contextual Moral Frames

The current study has identified five moral frames (social constructions of morals) in the school culture that were produced, manifested, and mediated in day-to-day social interactions in the schools. When students perceived the distress of a peer in school, they did this in relation to the moral frames in school. These moral frames offered them guidelines.

My grounded theory of moral frames in bystander situations in school demonstrates how these moral constructions in the school and peer culture might influence students when they find themselves as bystanders: the moral construction of the good student, institutionalized moral disengagement, tribe caring, gentle caring-girl morality, and social-hierarchy-dependent morality.

However, in many bystander situations, these moral frames seemed to inhibit rather than

promote helping behavior (even if gentle caring-girl morality motivated girls to help, the same moral frame inhibited boys from helping in different situations). In addition, the moral frames often created moral dilemmas or goal conflicts among students as moral frames might be in conflict with each other or with the students' empathic arousal and empathy-driven emotions, internalized social norms, or social processes in the situation.

5. Scanning for Social Status and Relations in the Situation

If bystander students noticed as well as interpreted that something was wrong and a peer in the situation was in need of help, they appeared to consider their own position in the social environment of the bystander situation before deciding whether or not to help. They took into account their own and others' relations to the peer in distress (scanning for social relations) as well as their own social status and that of the others present in the situation (scanning for social hierarchy). In the following excerpt, Elin indicated that she had scanned for social relations during the bystander situation we discussed. This scanning process in turn influenced her nonhelping behavior in the situation.

> RT: How come you didn't help him?
> Elin: Well, I thought David and Robin would help him.
> RT: Why?
> Elin: Because they are his best friends. I'm not his friend.
> (Informal conversation with a female student in grade 5)

According to my fieldwork, when there were only a few bystanders present and none of them had a high social status, there was a higher probability that a bystander with a low social status would help a peer in great distress. This proved especially true if the peer belonged to the same informal friend group (tribe) and as long as the situation did not involve peer harassment being conducted by higher-status students. A low-status student explained to me why she in some situations, but not in other situations, comforted a friend who was close to tears: "It's easier to comfort her if we are alone than if everybody is staring at us" (a girl in second grade).

Locating social status and relations in the actual bystander situation was apparently a result of considering or facing the moral frames above. In order to make sense of how to apply or follow these frames in the actual situation, the witnessing students had to analyze the situation and the people involved in it.

6. Condensing Motives for Action

The revised model of bystander behavior adapted to the school context indicates a complex set of sources for motives, not only empathic arousal, empathy-driven emotions, and moral frames in school. As predicted in the arousal: cost-reward model of bystander intervention (Dovidio et al., 1991; 2006), in many instances children as bystanders seemed to consider the probable rewards and costs before making a decision of how to act—especially the potential costs of helping a peer in distress (e.g., "I didn't tell them to stop because they would come after me then, I think, but if John or Oliver [two low-status students in the class] give him trouble, I would tell them to stop" [a middle-status boy in fifth grade]).

Audience inhibition and fear of social blunders, often mentioned in literature on prosocial behavior and the bystander effect (e.g., Bierhoff, 2002; Hogg & Vaughan, 2008), were found in the data and seemed to function as motivating forces for nonhelping behavior. These processes could also be associated with bystanders' consideration of probable costs in the arousal: cost-reward model (e.g., "There were so many people there, who were looking on. It would have been embarrassing to go over to him and comfort him or something" [a girl in fifth

grade]).

In a few instances students also admitted that they had considered egoistic motives and rewards for helping (e.g., "Well, if I help him, he'll help me when I need help" [a boy in second grade]; "I helped her because I want her to be my friend" [a girl in second grade]). However, these considerations of rewards and costs did not take place as isolated cognitive processes, but were indeed influenced by and embedded in social hierarchies. The costs of helping considered by low-status students and even by middle-status students might involve danger or potential personal harm, embarrassment, social disapproval, and the stigma of being associated with the victim. Such considerations were seldom expressed in follow-up conversations with leaders and high-status students as long as a perpetrator was not in a higher grade (and hence in a higher social rank).

Social processes in the bystander situation, in addition to social structures such as social hierarchies and groups (tribes), might influence the witnessing student's motivation and perceptions of personal responsibility on behalf of the distressed peer. Diffusion of responsibility, by which each bystander divides the entire responsibility to act among the several bystanders present so that their own personal responsibility becomes diffuse (Bierhoff, 2002; Latané & Darley, 1970), appeared to take place in some bystander situations (e.g., "Why should I have done something when there were many other people there who saw what'd happened and could have done something?" [a boy in second grade]).

However, what at first glance may seem to be diffusion of responsibility among witnessing children in many bystander situations was in fact not diffusion, but rather expressions of responsibility transfer to teachers, victim's friends, or higher-status students as an effect of the moral frames identified as institutionalized moral disengagement, tribe caring, or social-hierarchy-dependent morality.

In other cases, the identified diffusion of responsibility did not appear to be produced primarily by the many bystanders as the concept originally assumes, but by perceived moral dilemmas among students created by (*a*) a conflict between their own moral standard and the school's rules and authorities, (*b*) a conflict between being a benevolent fellow buddy and a wellbehaved student, or (*c*) a conflict between personal morality and social-hierarchy-dependent morality.

Both responsibility transfer and diffusion of responsibility lead to responsibility loss and thus inhibit helping or prosocial behavior. My study also shows a clear link between the extant concepts of fear of social blunders, audience inhibition, and fear of social costs and the newly emerged concepts (developed in the analysis of the field data) of social-hierarchy-dependent morality and the dictum of not standing out. Lower-status students appeared to be more vulnerable to these inhibiting factors than student leaders or higher-status students. Thus, in bystander situations (especially those involving many students), the decision of whether or not to initiate help seemed to be a social privilege for high-status students by which they manifested and maintained their power and social position among peers.

In sum, in bystander situations the students had to consider many motives, which were oftentimes in conflict with each other. When the motives were considered and condensed, the student could choose an action in line with the condensed motive: to help or not to help.

7. Acting in the Situation

The six preceding processes influenced students' actions in bystander situations. Students continued to interpret the actual situation and the actions of other people present. Finally, they acted upon these interpretations and interactions.

In short, bystander behavior was a social project and not an individual project. With reference to the symbolic interactionist tradition, Mead (1934) would call this a social act, while Blumer (1969) would refer to it as a joint action. As Blumer (1969) explains, "Human group

life consists of, and exists in, the fitting of lines of action to each other by the members of the group" (pp. 16–17).

According to a sociocultural perspective, cognition is distributed (Rogoff, 2003) and the students acquire skills by participating in social practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). They learn from each other as well as from their experiences and interpretations of the consequences of their and others' actions (compare with social learning theory; see Bandura, 1977). These social interaction patterns in turn manifest and uphold the moral frames in the school context.

Discussion

Student behavior in bystander situations in school settings could mainly be associated with the moral encounter called "the innocent bystander" that children, according to Hoffman (2000), face many times during their childhood and will have an impact on their prosocial and moral development. Nevertheless, according to current research, the demoralizing bystander effect occurs among adults (see Latané & Nida, 1981; Thornberg, 2007, pp. 8–9) as well as children (Caplan & Hay, 1989; Thornberg, 2007). When students are bystanders in bullying situations, they seldom intervene (Craig & Pepler, 1997; Craig et al., 2000).

According to the current dominant theories of prosocial behavior and moral development, prosocial (or helping) behavior and passive bystander behavior in emergency situations are primarily explained by individual psychological processes such as empathic distress or arousal (Dovidio et al., 1991; 2006; Hoffman, 2000), empathy-driven feelings (Bierhoff, 2002; Hoffman, 2000), rationally calculating costs and rewards of helping versus not helping (Dovidio et al., 1991; 2006), cognitive processing of social information (Hoffman, 2000; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Lapsley & Power, 2005; Latané & Darley, 1970), and levels of maturity through cognitive-developmental stages of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1969, 1984; Nucci, 2001).

Nevertheless, the school context, or culture (i.e., the moral atmosphere, social norms, peer culture, and classroom climate), has to be considered in order to gain a fuller understanding of children's social and moral development as well as prosocial behavior (compare with Matsumura, Slater, & Crosson, 2008; Solomon, Watson, & Battistich, 2001; Wilson, Pianta, & Stuhlman, 2007). For example, a recent study has shown a negative correlation between children's perceptions that the school's moral atmosphere has a high standard and their tendency to blame the victim in hypothetical bullying scenarios (Gini, 2008).

My study complements current individual psychological theories by highlighting five moral frames in the school context that emerged in the analysis of the two elementary schools studied. These moral frames apparently influenced children's judgments of appropriate behavior in bystander situations in school. The grounded theory of moral frames in bystander situations in school as well as the revised model of bystander behavior adapted to the school context acknowledge many basic properties from preexisting theories and are therefore open for further theoretical development in terms of integration and modification work through constant comparison with theories of bystander behavior and theories of children's morality.

The moral frame of gentle caring-girl morality as well as girls' tendency to help students in distress more often than boys in the current study can be related to empathy as a moral or prosocial motive (e.g., Eisenberg et al., 2004; Hoffman, 2000) as well as the ethic of care, which is often associated with a more female moral orientation (Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan, Ward, & McLean Taylor, 1988; Noddings, 2003). My findings confirm earlier research that demonstrates that girls express more empathy and tend to be more prosocial than boys, while boys are more likely to use physical aggression, focus on themselves, and ignore the concerns of others (for a review, see Eisenberg, Fabes, et al., 2006; for examples of research, see Green & Cillessen, 2008; Persson, 2005; Strayer & Roberts, 2004; Warden & Mackinnon, 2003; Zimmer-Gembeck, Geiger, & Crick, 2005).

In the current study, there is a clear within-gender variation regarding bystander behavior. The gentle caring-girl morality competes with other moral frames in school. Locating social status and relations in bystander situations have significant impacts on both girls' and boys' behavior. The GT of bystander behavior in school generated in the current study shows that bystander behavior among children cannot be confined to gender but is more complex and includes several moral frames that might operate in the actual bystander situation and in children's definition of the situation.

In addition, many students in this study reported reasons for helping as well as for not helping that appeared to express a variety of cognitive processes of social information in the particular situation (compare with Dovidio et al., 2006; Hoffman, 2000; Latané & Darley, 1970; Thornberg, 2007). Nevertheless, these individual psychological processes did not take place in social or cultural isolation but were clearly affected by the wider context such as the moral frames identified in the schools in this study.

Kohlberg (1969, 1984), for example, argues that children's respect for norms and authority in school as well as a lack of self-chosen ethical principles of conscience (which in turn might explain passive bystander behavior, at least in some instances) is a result of the individual child's immaturity and hence unfinished cognitive development through predetermined, invariant, and universal stages of moral reasoning. However, along with other researchers (e.g., Bergmann, 1998; Bhatia, 2000; Tappan, 2006; Tholander, 2002), I would argue that everyday social interactions and the social context in which the children operate heavily influence the construction and reproduction of morals among children.

Furthermore, the current study's findings indicate that the bystander effect is not a universal phenomenon that always occurs when there is more than one bystander, as the concept was initially conceived (Latané & Darley, 1970; Latané & Nida, 1981). Moral frames such as tribe caring and social-hierarchy-dependent morality influenced how schoolchildren behaved in bystander situations. In addition, social psychological aspects such as social categorization, in-group and out-group membership (i.e., being or not being a tribe member), and social roles that indicate status, leadership (compare with Baumeister et al., 1988), or competence (compare with Cramer et al., 1988) played an important role. Even if well-known social psychological processes behind bystander effects, such as pluralistic ignorance (Bierhoff, 2002; Darley et al., 1973; Latané & Darley, 1970), audience inhibition (Bierhoff, 2002; Hogg & Vaughan, 2008), and diffusion of responsibility (Latané & Darley, 1970), are possible heuristic concepts, the current study's context sensitivity, based on an ethnographic and GT approach, shows the importance of challenging as well as further developing and integrating these extant concepts with newer concepts in order to more fully explain the bystander behavior among students.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that merit discussion. First, the follow-up conversations conducted with students present a risk of social desirability bias (i.e., the informants might say things in order to place themselves in a favorable light instead of giving honest accounts). However, to minimize this bias, I consciously positioned my relationship with the students by taking the "least-adult role" (Mandell, 1991; Mayall, 2008) and thereby avoided a position of authority before conducting the follow-up conversations. In addition, during my interviews and informal conversations with the children, I took a nonjudgmental approach and assured them of the privacy of the conversation and the confidentiality of any information obtained from it. I treated the students as the main informants and competent commentators on their own lives as students in the school.

Second, all the causal statements in the GT of moral frames in bystander situations in school in this study are not statistically proven but based on interpretations of data made using

GT methods. Third, the sample limits the transferability of the findings, since it was sampled from only two elementary schools and six classrooms in one Swedish town. Furthermore, and in line with a constructivist position of GT (Charmaz, 2006), I do not claim to offer an exact picture but rather an interpretive portrayal of the phenomena in the schools studied. Hence, the GT of moral frames in bystander situations in school presented in this report should be seen as open for modification if new studies driven by GT methodology are conducted (Glaser, 1978, 1998). Moreover, compared to the traditional research on prosocial and non-helping behavior in bystander situations conducted in laboratories or in artificial settings, ethnographic research like this study demonstrates ecological validity. A lack, or low level, of ecological validity jeopardizes the very idea of generalization of research findings to people's real-life settings.

Finally, in contrast to the idea of statistical generalization, transferability in qualitative research is dependent on the degree of similarity between the sending and receiving contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1999). The reader has to carefully consider cultural and contextual similarities and differences. There might, for example, be variations between schools regarding moral frames as a result of differences in societies, cultures, school organizations, and social interaction patterns. The reader has to evaluate to what degree the findings and the concepts in this study fit, work, and are relevant in relation to the social context he or she has in mind (Glaser, 1978, 1998). Also, by conducting careful comparisons between my findings and the particular school with which the reader is familiar, he or she might discover if my GT and revised model require any modifications to achieve better fit, work, and relevance.

Implications for Teachers Concerning Moral Education

The present findings have implications for teachers regarding values or moral education. The grounded theory of moral frames in bystander situations in school settings indicates that moral education should not merely be reduced to teaching competence in moral thinking by intellectual moral discussions or simply teaching students to obey teachers and their rules and regulations. Moral education has to be related to students' everyday situations, and thereby include the moral encounters identified by Hoffman (2000) as they occur among students at school. Moral education has to include and focus on real-life incidents such as peer conflicts, teasing, harassment, social rejection, aggression, bullying, and other kinds of peer-in-need situations in which moral values are threatened.

Bystander situations in which students find themselves as actual bystanders are indeed learning opportunities in moral reasoning, emotions, motivation, and behavior, and in this capacity, highly relevant for teachers to incorporate into deliberative moral education. In order to educate and promote moral development and prosocial behavior among the students, teachers have to consider the school culture they produce in their day-to-day interactions with each other and with their students, the peer culture and social-psychological processes among their students, and the moral frames constructed and maintained in these cultures and in the latent pattern of interactions in everyday school life. These are a significant part of the hidden curriculum in school. Furthermore, moral education cannot be confined to the classroom setting and has to be recognized as part of the wider informal curriculum as well as being consciously carried out on the playground by teachers who are actually present, especially when research has shown that students' moral transgressions in terms of bullying, peer harassment, or victimization more often take place on the playground than in the classroom (Craig & Pepler, 1997; Craig et al., 2000; Pereria, Mendonca, Neto, Valente, & Smith, 2004; Wolke, Woods, Stanford, & Schultz, 2001). Teachers have to consider how they unconsciously might devalue and discourage students' real-life morals and instead consciously find strategies to empower them. In addition, teachers have to be aware of the differences in moral socialization between boys and girls as a result of the moral frame of the gentle caring-girl morality and

different gender ideals, and between children with different social statuses as a result of the moral frame of social-hierarchy-dependent morality.

The revised model of bystander behavior adapted to the school context shows the importance of empathy and empathy-driven emotions as prosocial motives in bystander situations. This is also in line with Hoffman's (2000) theory of moral development and is empirically well supported (see Eisenberg, Spinrad, et al., 2006; Eisenberg et al., 2004; Hoffman, 2000). Promoting boys' and girls' development of empathy and supporting them to be more sensitive to their empathy-driven emotions should not be overlooked at school. Moral development and education in elementary schools have to be far more proactive than merely making advances in moral reasoning and talking about hypothetical dilemmas in decontextualized classroom settings. Prosocial morality has to be practiced so that it can thereby become a significant part of students' sense-making and actions in everyday real life.

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