

# The moral dimension as a key to understand and prevent school bullying and cyberbullying



Research Gate  
profile

Ana Bravo Castillo

PhD candidate in Psychology  
University of Cordoba (Spain)  
Fulbright Visiting Student Researcher



# Today's program

1. Welcome and presentation: Who I am?
2. What do we mean when we talk about bullying?
3. The Social Structure of Participation of the Classroom
4. The Moral Dimension of the Bullying
5. Intervention Program: MoralMe

# A little about me



I am a PhD candidate in Psychology at the University of Cordoba in Spain  
My supervisors are Professors Eva Romera and Rosario Ortega-Ruiz

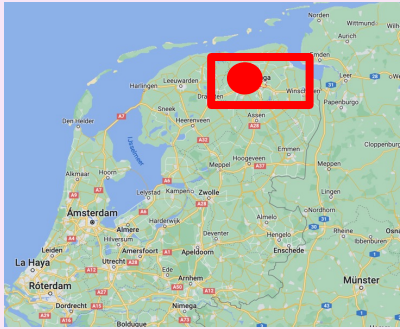
Between **2019-23**, I obtained one of the PhD National Training Grants funded by Spanish Ministry of Education, Science and Universities

I am a member of numerous national and international research, innovation and transfer projects



# A little about me

During my PhD studies, I have completed **two international research stays**:



In **2019** (3 months),  
supervised by Professor René Veenstra



In **2021/22** (4 months),  
supervised by Professor Christian Berger



I am currently on a **Fulbright** research  
stay (6 months) supervised by  
Professor Dorothy Espelage



# 1. What do we mean when we talk about bullying?

Repetition



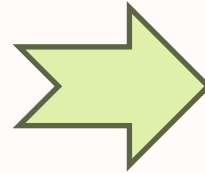
Intention

(Olweus, 1993)

Power imbalance



Dominance-submission scheme  
(Ortega-Ruiz, 2010)



Drawn and designed by Sergio Baena Arevalo

# 1. What do we mean when we talk about bullying?



(Pouwels et al., 2017, 2019;  
van der Ploeg et al., 2017)

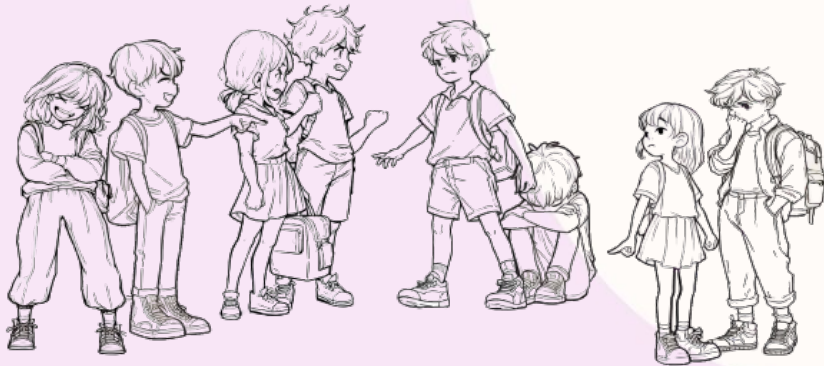


Less of **50%** of bullying bystanders  
assume a victim defender role  
(Ma et al., 2019)



**Law of silence**  
(Ortega-Ruiz, 2010, 2020)

# 1. What do we mean when we talk about bullying?



## Bullying roles

(Salmivalli, 2010; Salmivalli et al., 1996)

Overlap between opposed roles  
(e.g., Gini, 2006; Huitsing & Veenstra, 2012)

Correlation between similar roles  
(e.g., Demaray et al., 2016; Pouwels et al., 2018)

10-20% of students was not assigned to any specific role  
(e.g., Gini, 2006; Pouwels et al., 2018)

Limitations of conceptualizing roles from a **categorical** and **mutually** exclusive perspective

As a continuum where each student is assigned to a score within the role

Longitudinal perspective to identify changes in the adoption of different roles

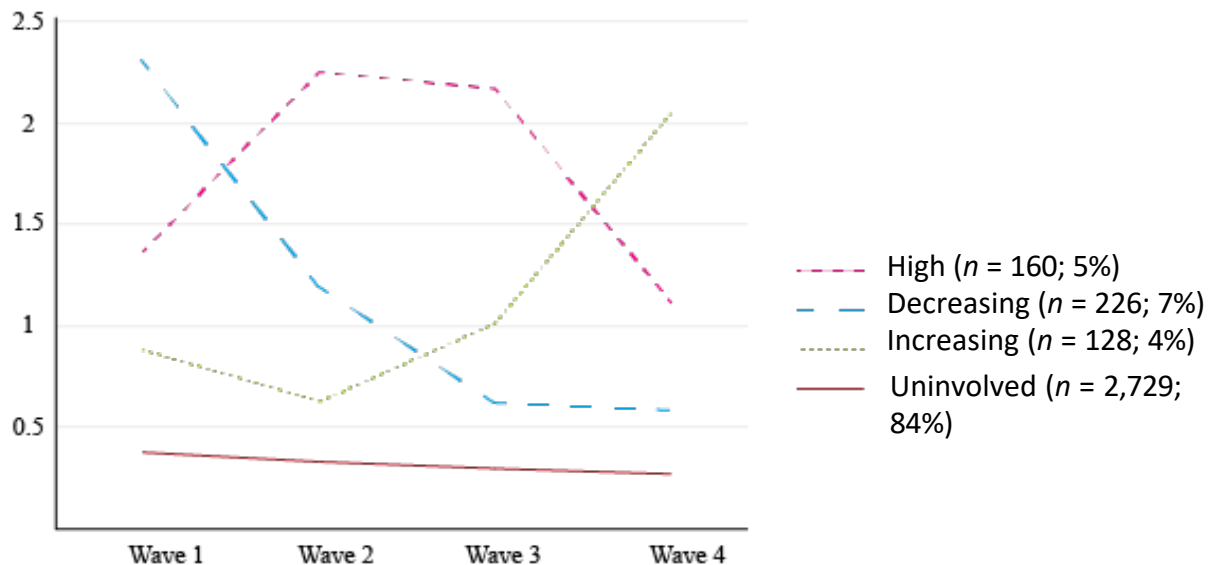
# Bullying Victimization Trajectories: Associations with Changes in Social Status Dimensions within the Classroom Group

Bravo, Ortega-Ruiz, & Romera (accepted)

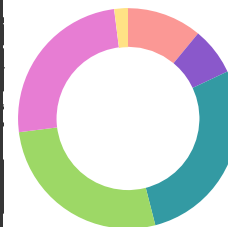
## Doble objetivo

First, to identify whether adolescents describe different victimization trajectories over time

### Latent Class Growth Analysis (LCGA)



## Participants (n = 3,182)



- 5th year primary (374)
- 6th year primary (223)
- 1st year secondary (861)
- 2nd year secondary (861)
- 3rd year secondary (812)
- 4th year secondary (61)

(M = 12.55, SD = 1.44; range 9-16 years)

50% girls

Future studies should explore the psycho-social characteristics that would be a protective or risk factor in the evolution and perpetuation of the role

This was our second objective, which we will discuss later



# Trajectories of defending behaviors: Longitudinal association with normative and social adjustment and self-perceived popularity

Bravo, Berger, Ortega-Ruiz, & Romera (2023)



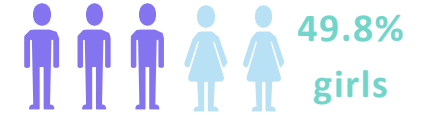
## Doble objetivo

First, to identify whether adolescents describe different defending trajectories over time

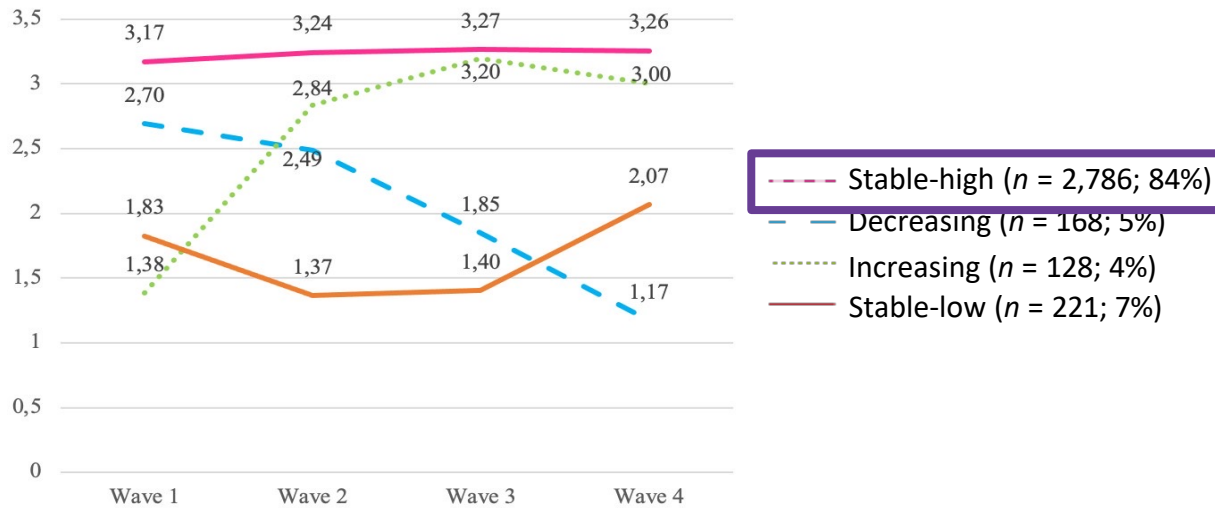
## Participants (n = 3,303)



- 5th year primary (379)
- 6th year primary (225)
- 1st year secondary (938)
- 2nd year secondary (876)
- 3rd year secondary (820)
- 4th year secondary (65)



## Growth mixture modeling (GMM)



# 1. What do we mean when we talk about bullying?



Bullying roles should be understood as a **role** that the individual assumes or acquires which is **changeable** and **unstable**, not being a stable characteristic of the individual.

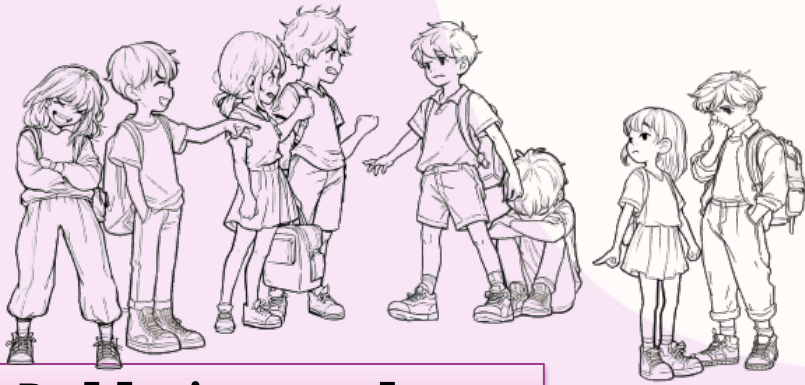
## Future studies should

1) Continue to explore such processes of change with the other roles:  
*What happen to bullies and their reinforcers?*



2) Explore different roles together which will allow a more complete and whole understanding of the phenomenon (e.g., Demaray et al., 2021)

### 3. The Social Structure of Participation of the Classroom



**Bullying roles**

(Salmivalli, 2010; Salmivalli et al., 1996)

Spend most of  
time together

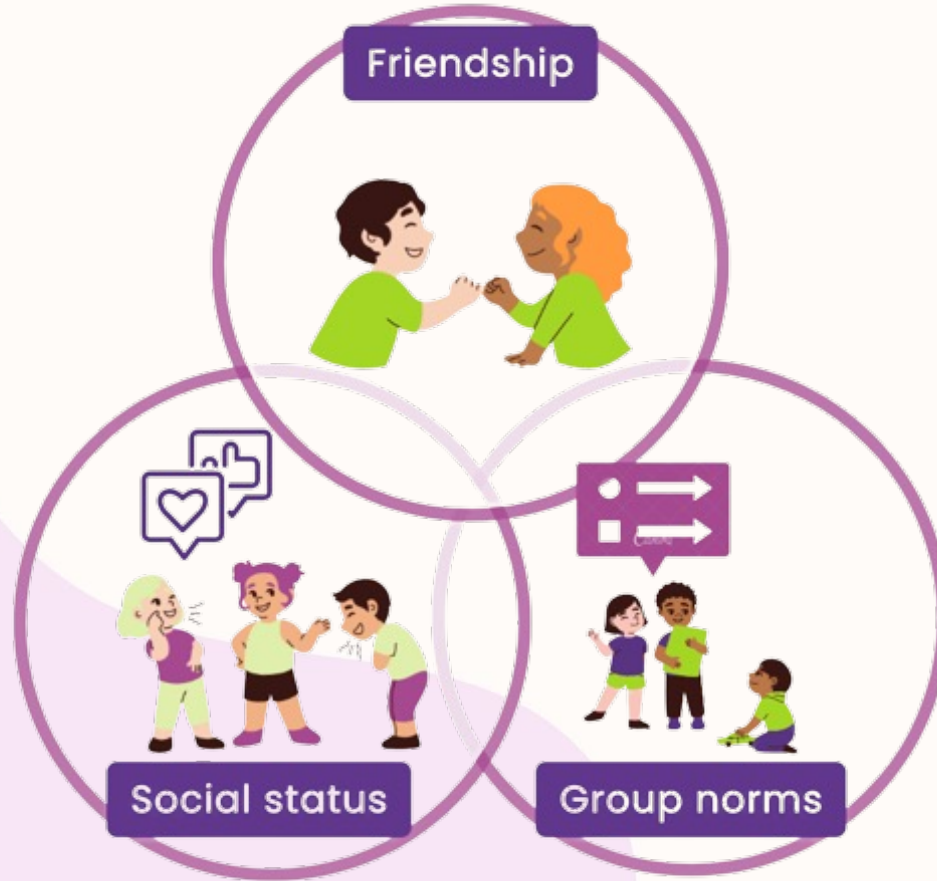


Not chosen  
voluntarily



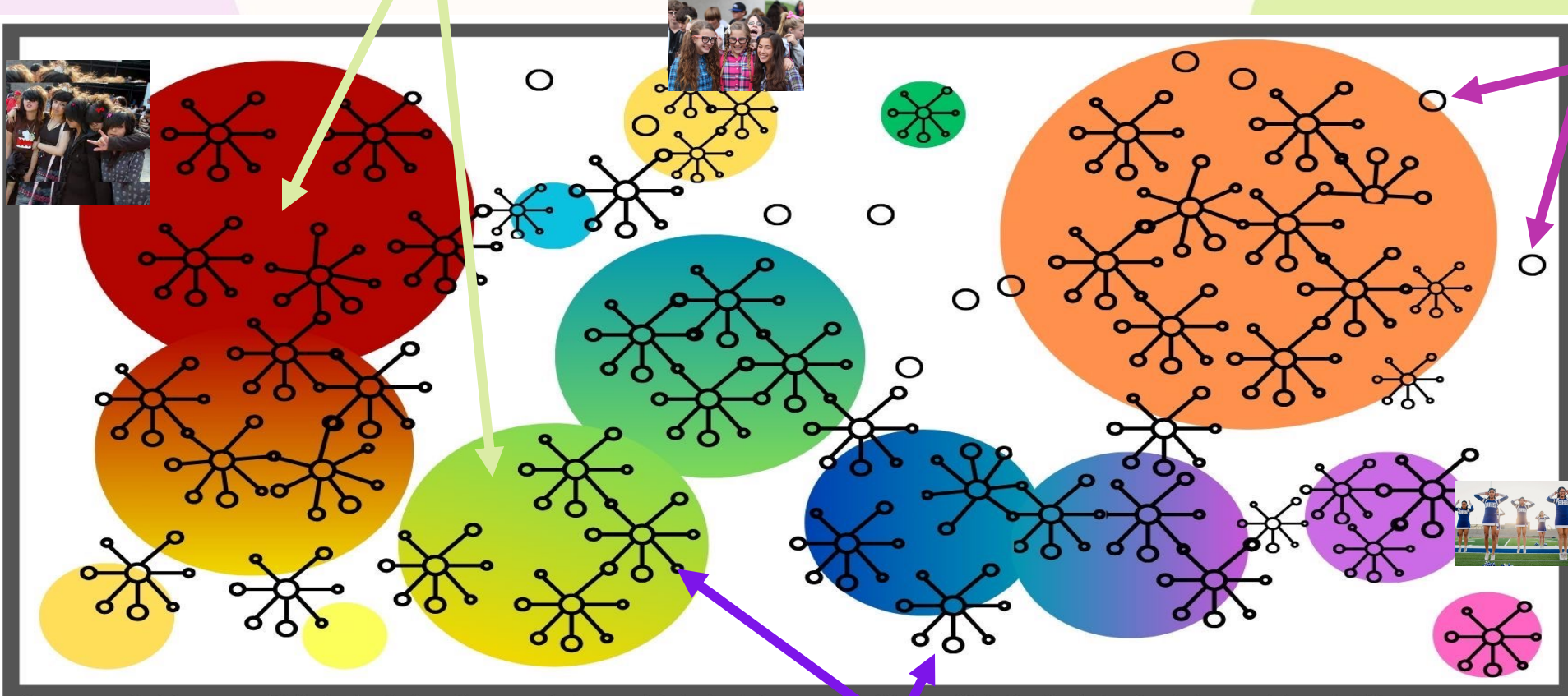
Socialization

### 3. The Social Structure of Participation of the Classroom



# Crowds

Colors of each crowds refer to the characteristics that define it (e.g., popularity, race, social preference, hobbies, etc.). These characteristics can be unique or mixed.



isolated children



(Bravo, Ortega-Ruiz et al., in press; Romera et al., 2019)

# Friend groups

Nodes and ties would represent individuals and emotional bond within the friendship group

(Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011; Brown, 2004; Steinberg, 2017)

# 3. The Social Structure of Participation of the Classroom

## Crowds: the social status position

Social status a snapshot of the individual relational position in the peer group

(Hymel et al., 2002; Mayeux et al., 2011)



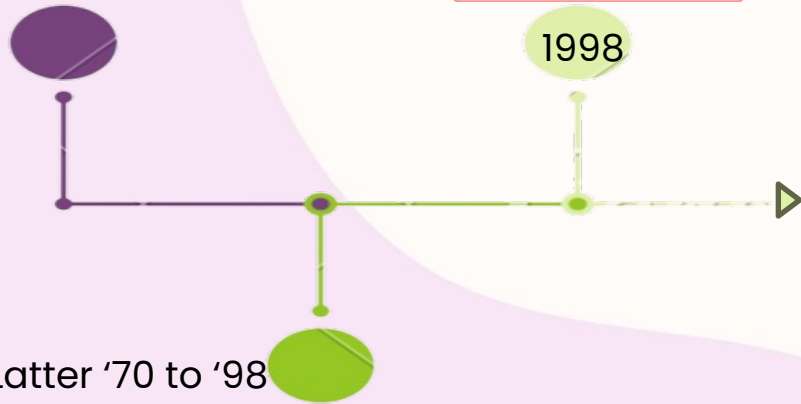
Was defined bases on the **affective** dimension

Horizontal relationship based on affection and respect

Social prestige, power, and visibility within the group




New studies based on 3 dimensions: acceptance, rejection and popularity (De Vries et al., 2021)

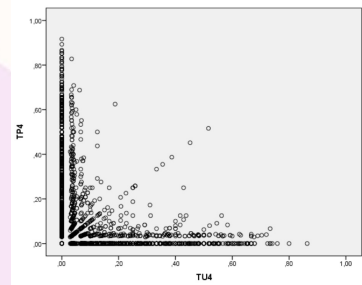


Popularity and unpopularity might not be the opposite poles of a linear continuum. Such as bullying and relational aggression



Latter '70 to '98

Popular profile  Different sociometric taxonomic were developed



A study empirically tested this proposal and found that the association between popularity and unpopularity was **L-shaped** (Bravo, Ortega-Ruiz et al., in press; Marks et al., 2021)

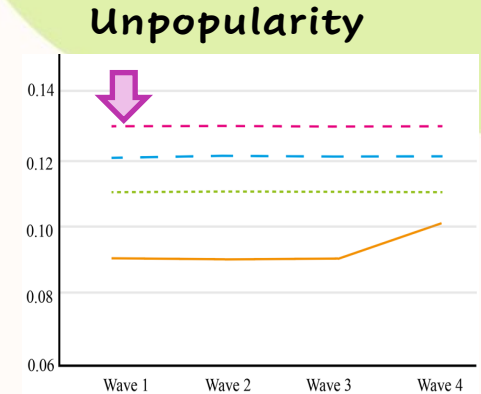
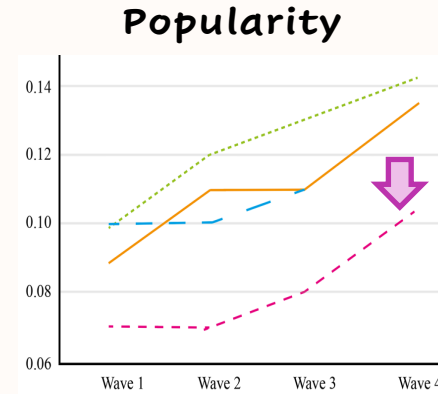
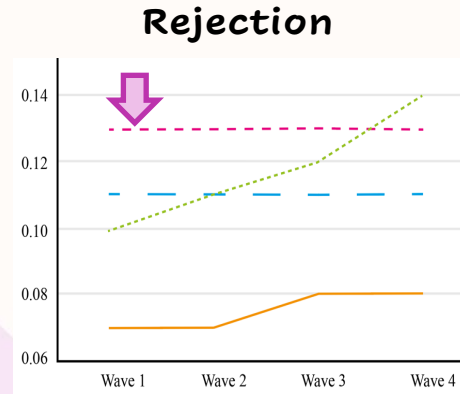
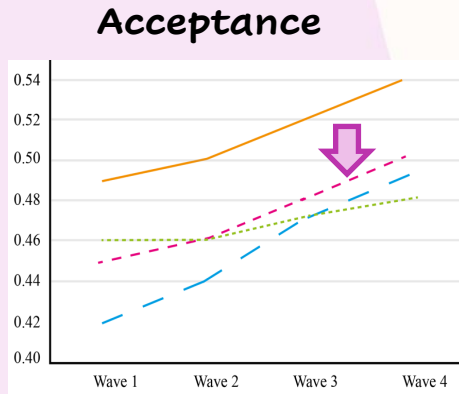
# Bullying Victimization Trajectories: Associations with Changes in Social Status Dimensions within the Classroom Group

## Doble objetivo

To describe and compare the initial levels and dynamics of change in acceptance, rejection, popularity, and unpopularity between victimization trajectory groups

- High ( $n = 160$ ; 5%)
- - - Decreasing ( $n = 226$ ; 7%)
- ..... Increasing ( $n = 128$ ; 4%)
- Uninvolved ( $n = 2,729$ ; 84%)

## LGCA multigroup model



A **time-maintained association** between being a victim on bullying situation and having a low social status within the classroom group. Future intervention programs should focus on promoting the social status of the victim to **break this vicious cycle** (Cook et al., 2010)

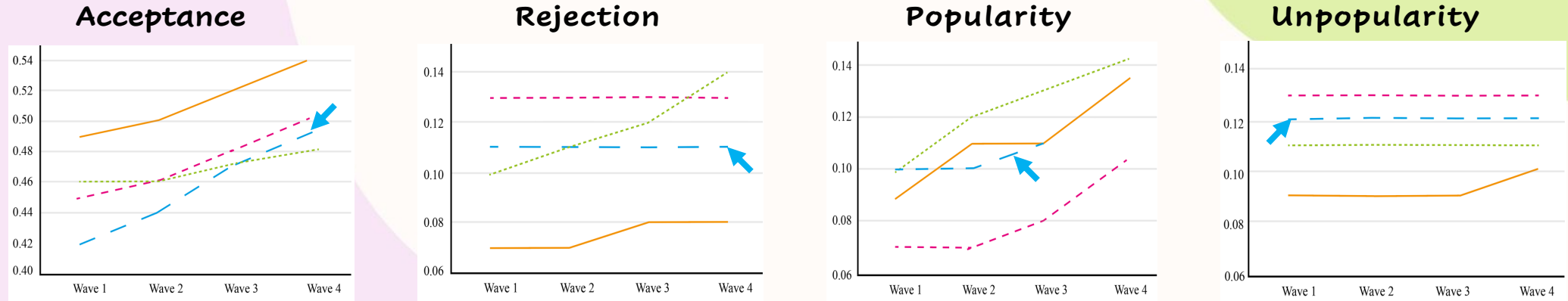
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## LGCA multigroup model



**Future studies** should explore the direction and causality of this association, and if other characteristics, such as the implication as bully or the friendship dynamic, play a key role in the level of acceptance and popularity of students escaping the role.



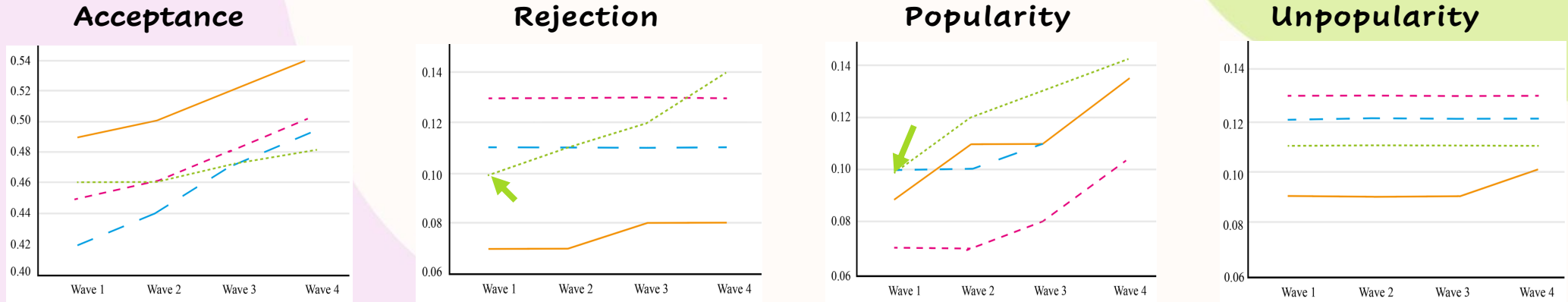
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## LGCA multigroup model



The association between **"be popular and then be disliked"** was describe as the **cycle of popularity** in a classical ethnography study (Eder, 1985)

# Bullying Victimization Trajectories: Associations with Changes in Social Status Dimensions within the Classroom Group

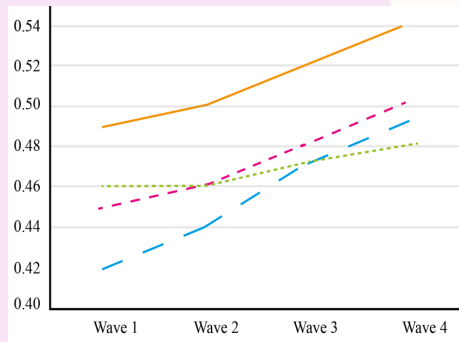
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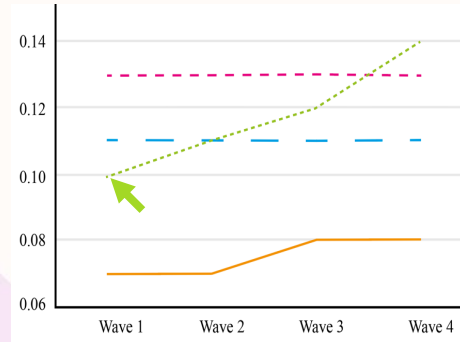
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## LGCA multigroup model

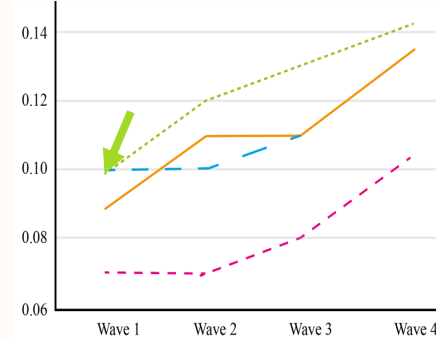
Acceptance



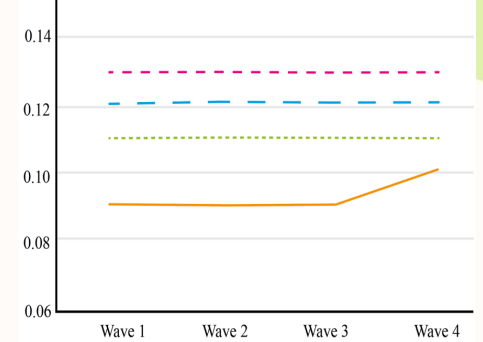
Rejection



Popularity



Unpopularity



Hypothesis: "be popular and THEN be disliked AND VICTIMIZED". We are testing this hypothesis through a social network study that explores the direction of the association between these three social dynamics



### 3. The Social Structure of Participation of the Classroom

## Cliques group: Friendship dynamic

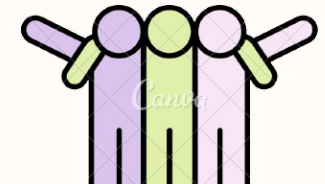
**Friendship** is a dyadic relationship based on trust, private exchange, and mutual support

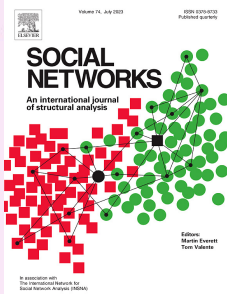


The relationship with friends becomes more intimate and requires spending more time together than in childhood (Bagwell & Bukowski, 2018; Sullivan, 1953)  
Friendship took place in denser (20-23 vs. 16-17), but less reciprocal (48-52 vs. 56-55) social dynamics in early adolescence (Bravo et al., 2022)



Friendship dynamics could impact on the bullying witnesses' motivations for defending (Thornberg et al., 2012) but also for reinforcing the bullies or remain outside the bullying situation





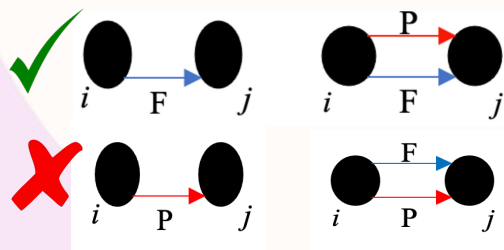
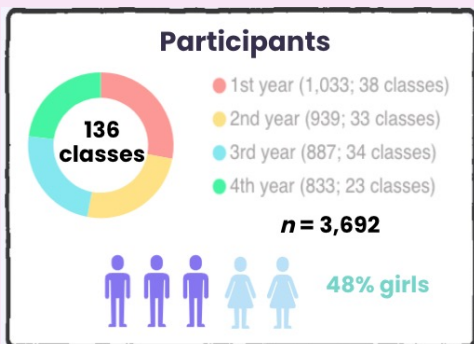
# How Adolescents' Popularity Perceptions Change: Measuring Interactions Between Popularity and Friendship Networks

Bravo, Krause, Ortega-Ruiz, & Romera (accepted)

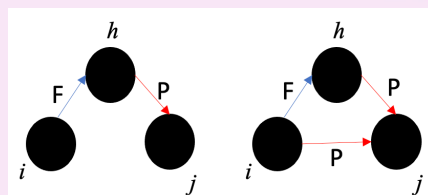
## Doble objetivo

To examine changes in popularity perceptions and their relation to friendship using a longitudinal multi-network approach

ANALYSIS: Bayesian Random-Coefficient Multilevel SAOMs in RSiena



This could be explained because befriends peers whom they perceive as high in popularity. Since these friendship dynamics would not be based on a balanced and intimate relationship (Bagwell & Bukowski, 2018)



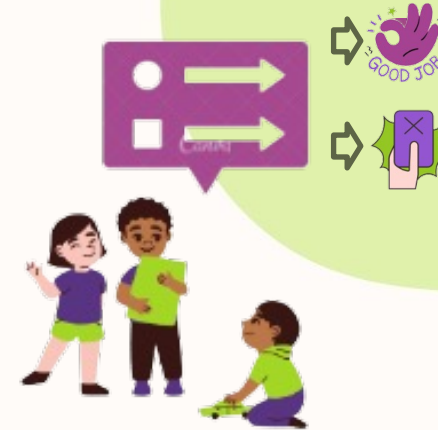
Friends would be an essential social reference during adolescence, and friends conforming facilitates group cohesion and enhances the sense of security and confidence in the continuity of the relationship (Laursen & Veenstra, 2021)

### 3. The Social Structure of Participation of the Classroom

#### Peer group norms



Similarity-attraction effect (Byrne, 1971)



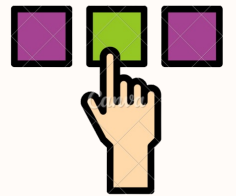
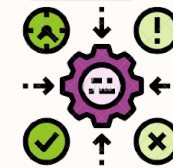
#### Theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020)



1. Her personal motivation -> *What do I want to achieve with my behavior?*



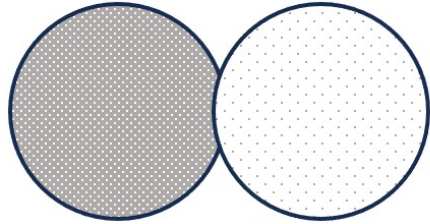
2. Her evaluation and analysis of the reality



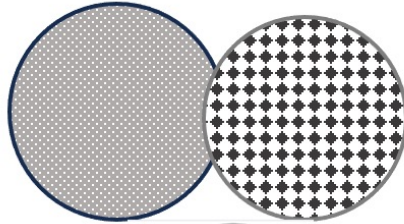
Make a decision and receive feedback

### 3. The Social Structure of Participation of the Classroom

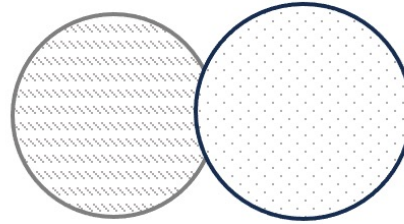
#### Peer group norms



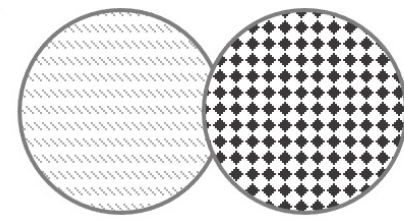
Maria's classmates usually hit and insult Luis.



Maria believes that most of her classmates hit and insult Luis.



Maria's classmates laugh when other hit and insult Luis.



Maria believes that her classmates enjoy when others hit Luis.



Descriptive norms



Injunctive norms

**Normative Behavior Theory**  
 (Cialdini et al., 1991)



Actual norm



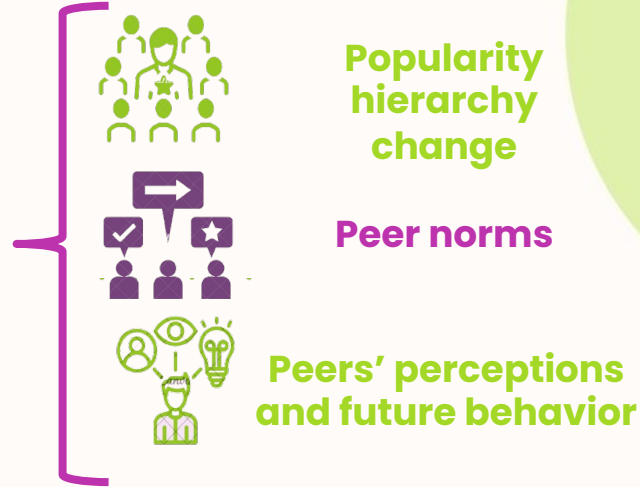
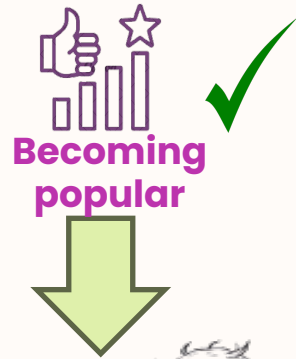
Perceived norm

**Social Norms Theory**  
 (Perkins & Berkowitz, 1986)

### 3. The Social Structure of Participation of the Classroom

How could bullying  
classroom norms  
influence in the social  
status of each role?

#### Peer group norms





RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Differences in perceived popularity and social preference between bullying roles and class norms

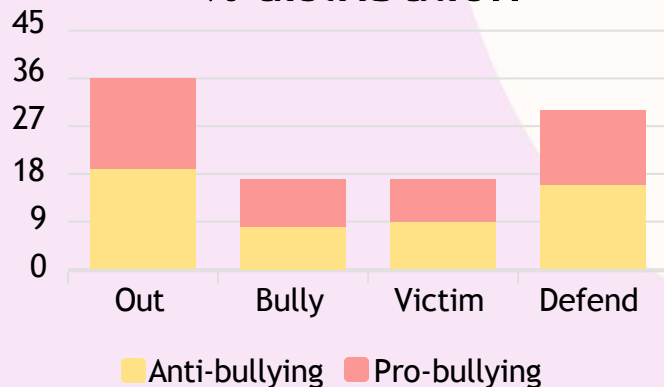
Eva M. Romera<sup>1\*</sup>, Ana Bravo<sup>1\*</sup>, Rosario Ortega-Ruiz<sup>1\*</sup>, René Veenstra<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Psychology Department, Universidad de Córdoba, Córdoba, Spain, <sup>2</sup> Sociology Department, University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands

## Main objective

To analyze if the relation between Social preference, popularity, bullying roles and bullying class norms differed between primary and secondary schools and boys and girls

### % distribution



Only differences based on gender ( $\chi^2 = 69.44$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Boys more often bullies (74%) and girls defenders (58%)

## Participants (n = 1,359)

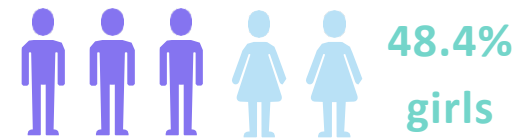


(M = 12.67, SD = 0.80)

● 1sr-2nd secondary (674)

● 5-6th primary (685)

(M = 10.41, SD = 0.49)



SP: Defender > outsider > bully = victim  
 No differences based on bullying class norms were found  
 PP: Differences were found based on bullying class norm

### MANOVA analyses and Post-hoc tests

In **primary** school, **bullies** were not **more popular** than **other roles**. But, their levels high and similar to defender in **pro-bullying classes**. This similarity was also found in **secondary** classes **regardless** of the type of norm.

For **gender**, boys described a similar structure regardless of the type of norms. Being similar in popularity: **Defenders and bullies**



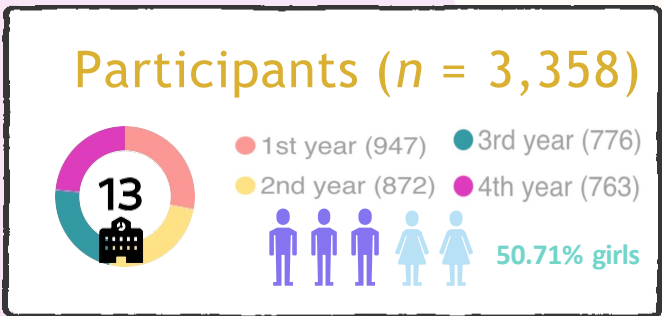


Aggressive and Defensive Behaviour, Normative, and Social Adjustment in the Complex Dynamics of School Bullying

Manuel Carmona-Rojas, Rosario Ortega-Ruiz, Eva Romera, and Ana Bravo  
 Universidad de Córdoba, Spain

Three objectives

1) To explore whether different types of clusters exist in the perceptions of bullying class norms



Complementary analyses

Type of behaviour	Anti-bullying (n = 1,617; 48%)			Indirect defending (n = 917; 27%)			Indifferent (n = 501; 15%)			Pro-bullying (n = 323; 10%)		
	Anti	Indiff	Pro	Anti	Indiff	Pro	Anti	Indiff	Pro	Anti	Indiff	Pro
Befriending a victim	65.6	22.7	11.8	35.6	15.9	48.6	15.9	60.5	23.7	23.8	22.9	53.4
Laughing with others	91.1	3.6	5.3	87.5	6.4	6.1	20.3	75.4	4.3	23.8	23.1	53.1
Telling a teacher	82.1	17.9	0	46.2	5.7	48.1	20.7	47.4	31.9	36.9	7.4	55.7
Participating in bullying	99	0.07	0.03	93.5	2.5	4	33.9	65.6	0.05	20.4	26	53.6
Helping the bully	91.7	6.9	1.4	79.9	10.4	9.6	16.5	78.5	5.1	11.9	15	73.1
	$M_{w1}$	$M_{w2}$	$M_{w1}$	$M_{w2}$	$M_{w1}$	$M_{w2}$	$M_{w1}$	$M_{w2}$	$M_{w1}$	$M_{w2}$	$M_{w1}$	$M_{w2}$
Defending	3.20	3.14	3.08	3	2.57	2.65	2.73	2.83				
Aggression	0.14	0.16	0.23	0.22	0.22	0.24	0.34	0.32				
Victimization	0.32	0.41	0.50	0.50	0.37	0.44	0.71	0.64				

The t-student test results showed significant changes for the **three bullying behaviors** in group with antibullying norms and only for **victimization** in group with indifferent norms. Non-differences for role in the other two groups.



### 3. The Social Structure of Participation of the Classroom



**Bullying** should be described as part of a social and relational dynamic which is influenced and influences in its evolution

#### Future studies should

- 1) Explore the differences and social characteristics of the girls who are victimized in probullying settings
- 2) Analyze the bullying class norms using other methodological to obtain a better description of the group social dynamic

## 4. The Moral Dimension of the Bullying

**Morality** is defined as the conception of human welfare, justice and rights, and the regulation of actions that affect others (Nucci, 2001)



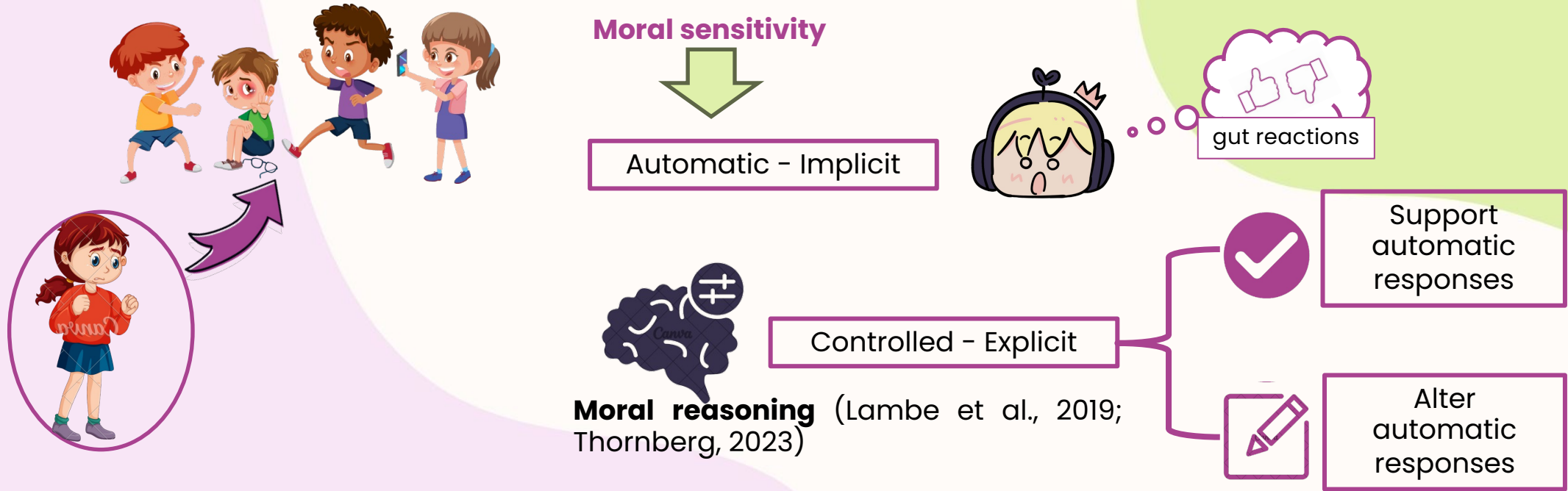
**Bullying** is an instrumental behavior that deliberately harms the victim (Hymel et al., 2010)

**Morality** plays a key role in the making-decision process and behavior develop by adolescents during bullying situations

(Romera et al., 2019; Thornberg, 2023)

# 4. The Moral Dimension of the Bullying

Dual process theory of moral reasoning (Haidt, 2001; 2007)



Neurological research confirmed the interplay between both processes (see Greene, 2014)



## 4. The Moral Dimension of the Bullying



**Moral sensitivity** is the ability to recognize moral issues in complex settings and generate an affective response to them (Rest, 1986)

**Moral sensitivity** is associated with the self-schema developed during socialization process (Sparks, 2015), and it allows us to discriminate moral transgressions from socio-conventional norms (Caravita et al., 2009)

fMRI studies shown that there is evidence of greater activation of neural regions involved in social cognition and empathy when harm is perceived to be intentionally caused, as opposed to accidentally (Decety et al., 2013)



**Moral sensitivity** has been understood through **twofold** component: the **recognition** of moral concerns and the **affective** response (Rest, 1986)

## 4. The Moral Dimension of the Bullying

### Moral sensitivity



#### Peer and online moral sensitivity scale (in validating)

**Peer scale:** 7 items for moral affective response (“I don't like to see someone isolated at playground”) y 5 items for recognition of moral issue (“I can usually recognize when someone is teasing me with bad intentions”).

CFA:  $\chi^2(53) = 94.853, p < .001, CFI = 0.986, TLI = 0.982, RMSEA = 0.027, 90\%CI [0.018, 0.036]$

**Online scale:** 7 items for both dimensions (moral affective response: “I don't like it when people always make fun of the same people on the Internet” and recognition of moral issue: “I can notice if a joke in a chat room becomes offensive”).

CFA:  $\chi^2(76) = 193.334, p < .001, CFI = 0.968, TLI = 0.963, RMSEA = 0.038, 90\%CI [0.031, 0.044]$ .

The items were answered on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree).

Descriptive  
analyses

## 4. The Moral Dimension of the Bullying

### Peer and online moral sensitivity scale (in validating)

A total of 2,157 students (50% girls) between 10 to 16 years old ( $M_{age} = 12.67; SD = 1.53$ ).

686 children were involved from the two last years of primary schools the, and 1,471 students participated from the first three years of secondary school

### Descriptive

#### Gender

	AS Bull	RS Bull	AS Cy	RS Cy
Boy	3.86	4.11	3.77	3.78
Girl	4.19	4.25	4.12	4.04

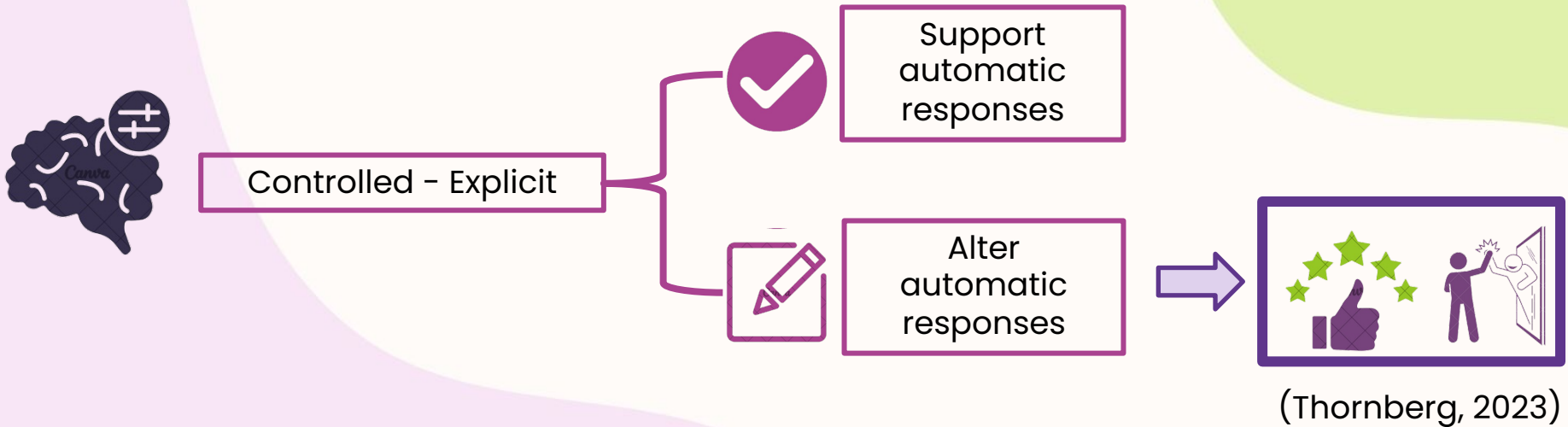
↗ All *t*-student tests was significant. Cohen's *d* range .86 to .71

#### School levels

	AS Bull	RS Bull	AS Cy	RS Cy
5th	4.25 <sup>a</sup>	4.29 <sup>a</sup>	4.13 <sup>a</sup>	4.06 <sup>a</sup>
6th	4.05 <sup>b</sup>	4.19 <sup>ab</sup>	3.96 <sup>a</sup>	3.9 <sup>a</sup>
7th	3.96 <sup>b</sup>	4.11 <sup>b</sup>	3.91 <sup>b</sup>	3.87 <sup>b</sup>
8th	3.93 <sup>b</sup>	4.14 <sup>b</sup>	3.84 <sup>b</sup>	3.84 <sup>b</sup>
9th	3.98 <sup>b</sup>	4.19 <sup>ab</sup>	3.87 <sup>b</sup>	3.88 <sup>b</sup>

ANOVA tests were significant for all variables. Bonferroni post hoc tests showed significant differences between suffixed letters

## 4. The Moral Dimension of the Bullying

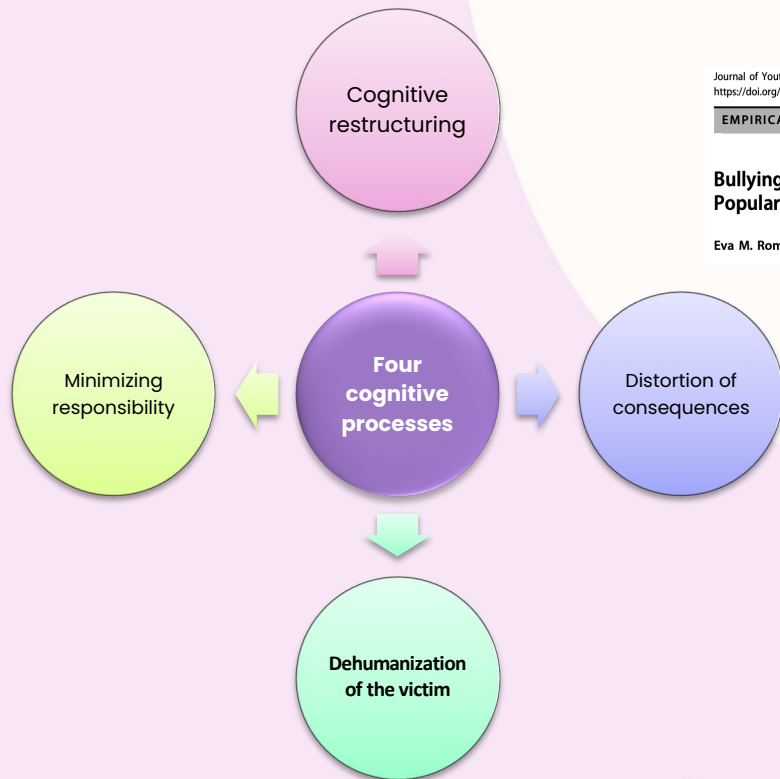




# 4. The Moral Dimension of the Bullying



**Moral disengagement** (MD) is a set of cognitive-emotional processes that leads to justifying immoral acts, avoiding the associated emotions of guilt or shame (Bandura 2016; Bandura et al., 1996)



Journal of Youth and Adolescence (2021) 50:2021–2035  
https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-021-01482-4

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

**Bullying Perpetration, Moral Disengagement and Need for Popularity: Examining Reciprocal Associations in Adolescence**

Eva M. Romera<sup>1</sup> · Rosario Ortega-Ruiz<sup>1</sup> · Kevin Runions<sup>2</sup> · Antonio Camacho<sup>1</sup>

SCAN ME!

Random Intercept Cross-Lagged Panel Model



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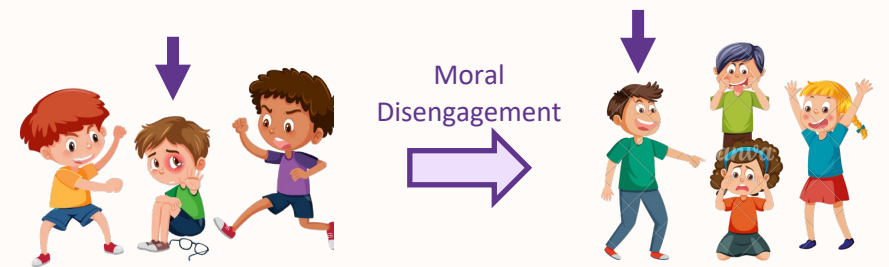
**Why do Victims become Perpetrators of Peer Bullying? Moral Disengagement in the Cycle of Violence**

Daniel Falla<sup>1</sup>, Rosario Ortega-Ruiz<sup>1</sup>, Kevin Runions<sup>2</sup>, and Eva M. Romera<sup>1</sup>

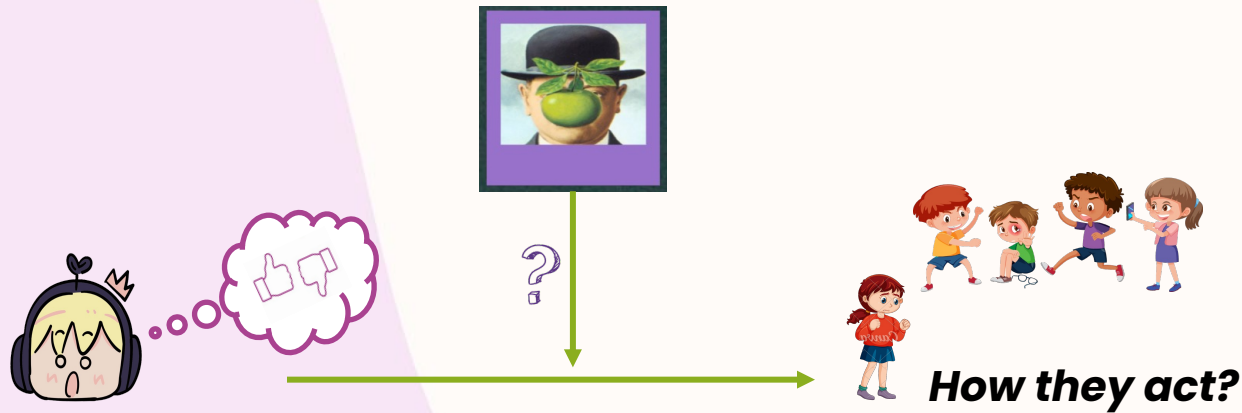
Youth & Society  
2022, Vol. 54(3) 397–418  
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## 4. The Moral Dimension of the Bullying



Moral sensitivity in bullying was **negatively** related to pro-bully behavior and **positively** to outsider and defender behavior, mediated all these effects by MD in bullying  
(Thornberg & Jungert, 2013)

*What happen with victims and aggressor?*

No previous studies have explored separately the association between two dimensions of **moral sensitivity** and aggression and victimization, neither if the moderating role of **moral disengagement** in the association between both **dimensions** of **moral sensitivity** and the involvement in aggression and victimization is different

Preliminary result presented on the World  
Anti-bullying Forum (2023)



**Preliminary result** presented on the World Anti-bullying Forum (2023)

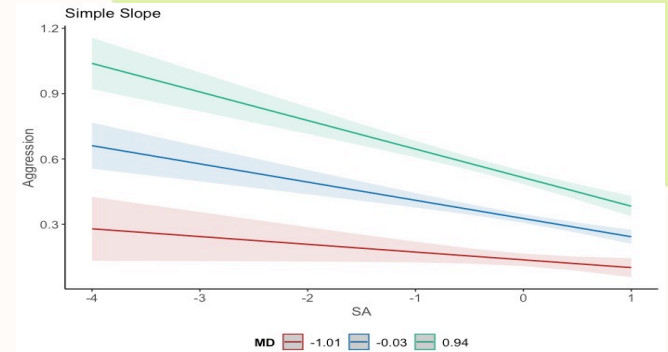
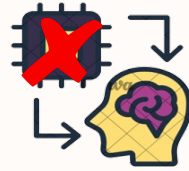
Participant were a total of 3,512 students (44.6% girls,  $M_{age} = 12.7$ ;  $SD = 1.54$ ) from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> school levels.

**4-step univariate linear regression analysis** were conducted.

Negative **MA** and positive **MD** levels

No-association with **recognition** of the moral issue

**Intervention programs** should include the promotion of this emotional involvement in the well-being of other.



**Bullies** may make **strategic use** not only of their resources (e.g., Reijntjes et al., 2018) but also of their abilities to **achieve their goals**

Our current goal is explored the **longitudinal association** between **moral recognition** and **MD** among aggressive adolescents

Victims **recognized** the moral issue of bullying behaviors, and did a use of the **MD strategies** probably to reduce the impact of the situations that they are living



**Becoming involved as bullies over time**



**Our next goal** is explored longitudinally this association and which kind of **MD strategies** are more frequent among victims involve in this **cycle of violence** (Falla et al., 2022)



## 4. The Moral Dimension of the Bullying

**Identifies** their emotional reaction to an immoral behavior or situation.

Actively **observes** and **recognizes** moral issues in any context.

What are the characteristics of a morally competent person?

**Knows** and **connects** with moral standards. In addition to **analyze** and **evaluate** from a moral perspective their own behavior and that of others.



## 4. The Moral Dimension of the Bullying



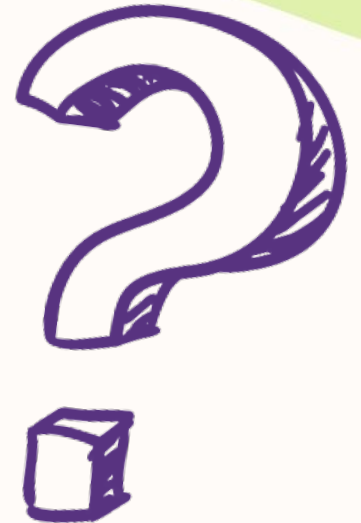
(Pouwels et al., 2017, 2019;  
van der Ploeg et al., 2017)



Less of **50%** of bullying witnesses  
assume a victim defender role

(Ma et al., 2019)

# What allows us to transform intentions into actions



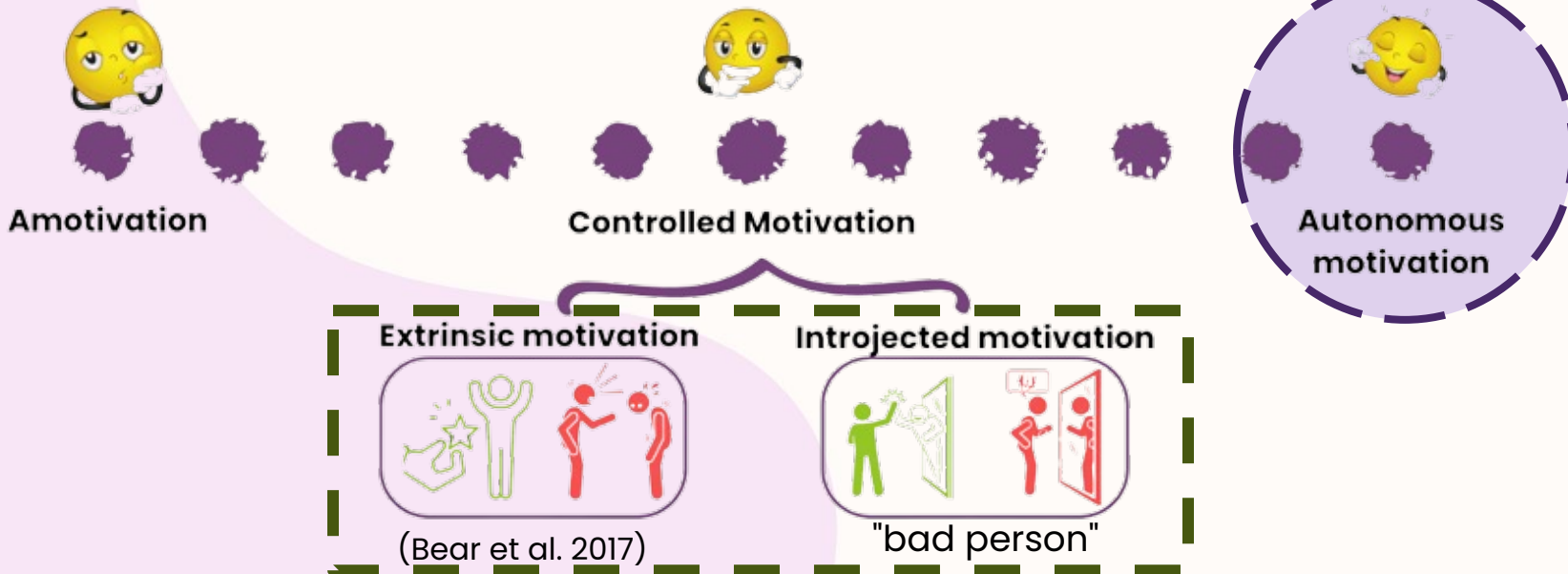
## 4. The Moral Dimension of the Bullying



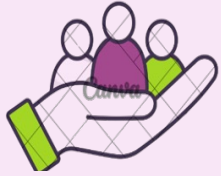
**Motivation** is the psychic energy that drives us to initiate and maintain a behavior.



### *Self-determination theory (Ryan & Decy, 2017)*



## 4. The Moral Dimension of the Bullying



**Moral motivation** would be the willingness to behave in accordance with an ethical norm, even when this may entail a personal cost or conflict with another social goal or desire (Nunner-Winkler, 2007)

**Moral courage** implies that the bystander recognizes that the behavior is unfair, this pushes them to try to prevent or stop it and to attempt to overcome the obstacles (Dungan et al., 2019; Goodwin et al., 2020).



*Moral courage would be the **final impulse** that would transform the motivation and predisposition into an actual act*

## 4. The Moral Dimension of the Bullying

### Limitations in the study of moral courage

Most of the studies have described it among later adolescents and adults (Baumert et al., 2013; Galdi et al., 2017; Osswald et al., 2010)



However, moral cognition is developed during childhood and adolescence (Malti & Ongley, 2014). It is essential to explore this complex process and its association with bullying situations

Most of the studies have focused on **hierarchical** and complex situations such as military or medical emergencies (Sekerka & Bagozzi, 2007)



But there are not previous scales which measure adolescents' moral courage to defend in bullying situations



## 4. The Moral Dimension of the Bullying

### Moral sensitivity



### Moral Courage in Bullying Situations Scale (in validating)

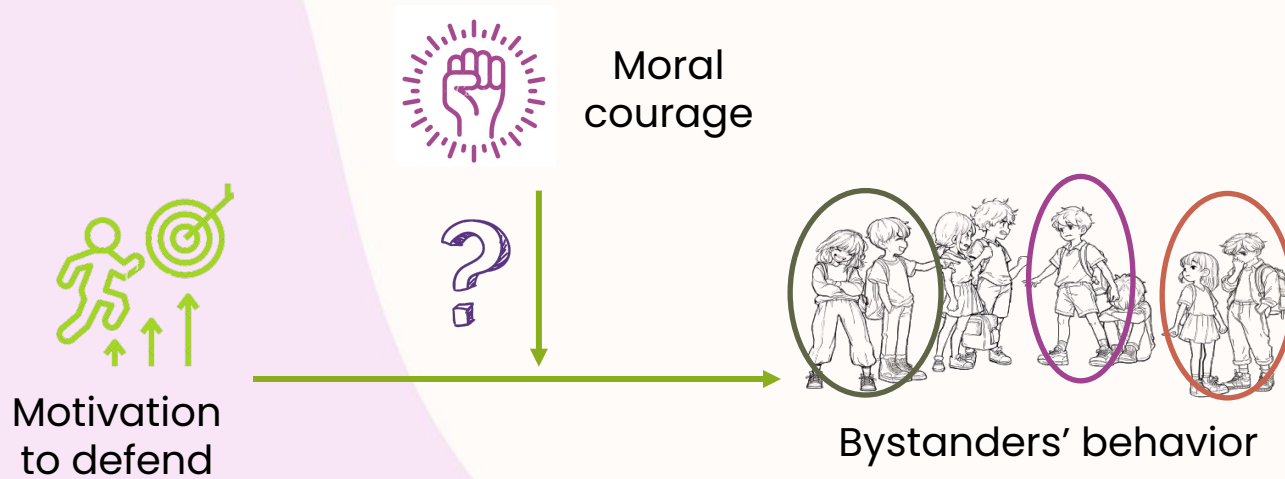
A total of 6 items in a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree). Children and adolescents should indicate their agreement with the item (f.e., "I would defend a victim in a bullying situation, even if my classmates turn me away")

**CFA:**  $\chi^2 (9) = 58.558, p < .001, CFI = .955, TLI = .925, RMSEA = .08, 90\%CI [.063, .103]$

**Preliminary descriptive analyses** suggest that girls and younger adolescents have higher levels of moral courage

**Preliminary result** presented on the XI International Congress of Psychology and Education (2023)

Participant were a total of 2,406 students (44.6% girls,  $M_{age} = 11.74$ ;  $SD = 1.32$ ) from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> school levels. **4-step univariate linear regression analysis** were conducted



**Motivations to defend victims in school bullying situations scale** (Jungert et al., 2016)

6 items for autonomous motivation (“Because I like to help other people”), 4 items for introjected motivation (“To avoid feeling guilty”), and 5 items for extrinsic motivation (“To become popular”). The items were answered on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree).

**Internal consistence:** autonomous  $\alpha = .86$ ; introjected  $\alpha = .72$ ; y external  $\alpha = .81$

**Preliminary result** presented on the XI International Congress of Psychology and Education (2023)

Participant were a total of 2,406 students (44.6% girls,  $M_{age} = 11.74$ ;  $SD = 1.32$ ) from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> school levels. **4-step univariate linear regression analysis** were conducted



	Defender		
	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
Step 4	.091	.01*	
Gender			.10**
Age			-.27***
MA			.43***
MI			-.02
ME			-.07*
CM			.43***
MA x CM			-.34
MI x CM			-.14
ME x CM			.26

In contrast to previous studies, a negative association was found with motivation based on external consequences

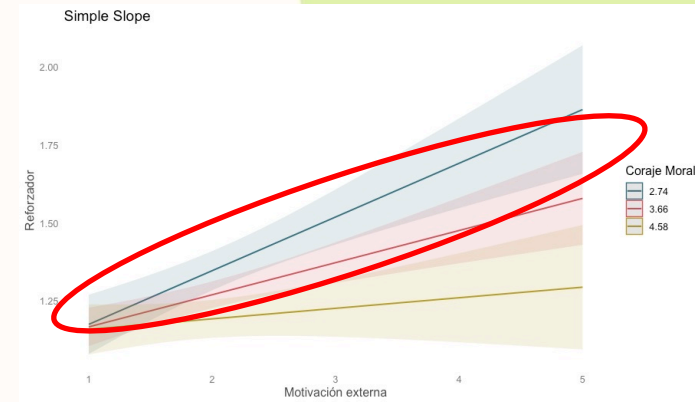
- Future studies should explore:
1. Whether there are differences between adolescents in primary and secondary school
  2. Between the kind the external reward and cost, because there are differences in the relevance of peers and adults at these ages

**Preliminary result** presented on the XI International Congress of Psychology and Education (2023)

Participant were a total of 2,406 students (44.6% girls,  $M_{age} = 11.74$ ;  $SD = 1.32$ ) from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> school levels. **4-step univariate linear regression analysis** were conducted



	Bullying reinforcement		
	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
Step 4	.038	.013*	
Gender			-.16***
Age			.02
MA			-.20***
MI			-.03
ME			.16***
CM			-.14***
MA x CM			.24
MI x CM			.10
ME x CM			-.50**



(Huising & Veenstra, 2012)



(Reijntjes et al., 2018)

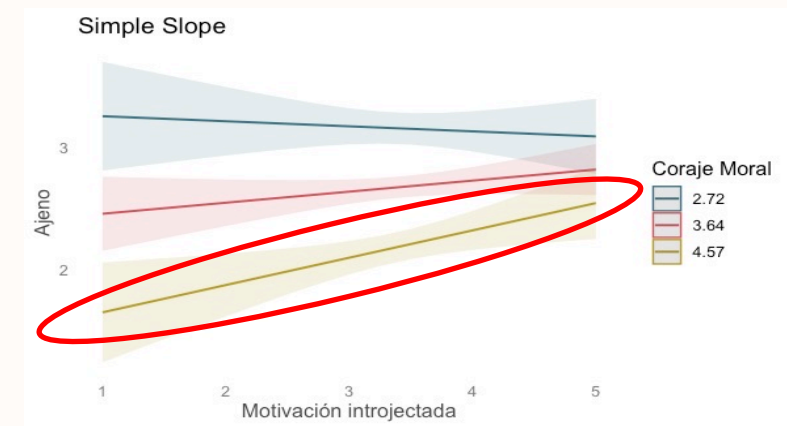
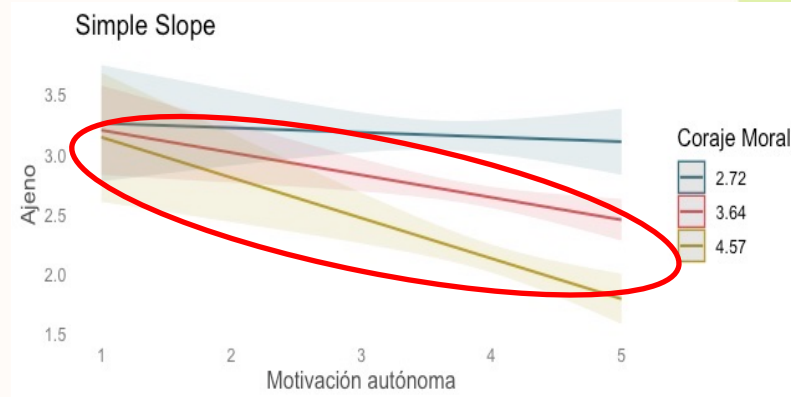
Future qualitative studies should explore which external aspects are associated with a greater predisposition to defend

**Preliminary result** presented on the XI International Congress of Psychology and Education (2023)

Participant were a total of 2,406 students (44.6% girls,  $M_{age} = 11.74$ ;  $SD = 1.32$ ) from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> school levels. **4-step univariate linear regression analysis** were conducted.



	Outsider		
	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
Step 4	.034	.01*	
Gender			-.07
Age			.15***
MA			-.31***
MI			.10
ME			.14***
CM			-.37***
MA x CM			-.74*
MI x CM			.61*
ME x CM			.12



## 4. The Moral Dimension of the Bullying



**Moral domain** should be described from a **multidimensional** perspective to understand what moral mechanisms are in play during bullying situations

### Future studies should

- 1) Describe the longitudinal association between moral dimensions and bullying roles
- 2) Explore the direction of the effect and association between the different moral dimensions
- 3) Adopt a developmental perspective to describe the children and adolescent development in the different moral dimensions

# Data included in all these studies



Socio-moral competence and peer ecology in student-to-student violence: A longitudinal and transactional study

(PSI2016-74871-R)

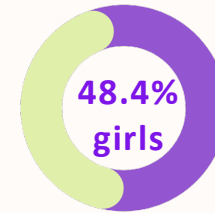
PI: Eva M. Romera


**2016-2020**



## Participants

$N = 6,089$  students ages 9–17 years  
( $M = 13.14$ ;  $SD = 1.72$  at Wave 1)



**22**   
● Primary (45%)  
● Secondary (55%)

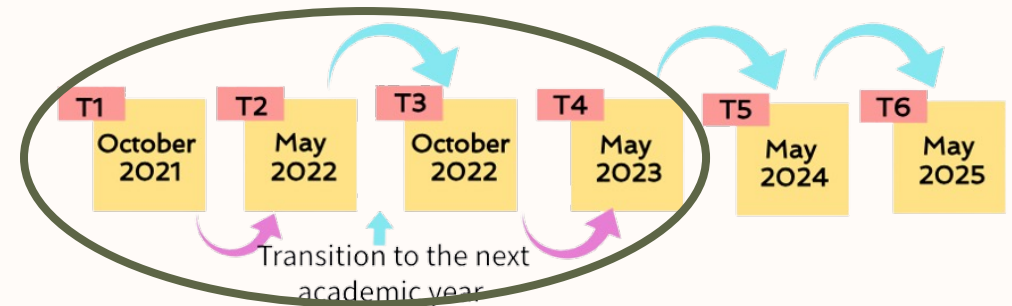


# Data included in all these studies

## Participants

$N = 4,847$  students currently, ages 9–17  
years ( $M = 12.26$ ;  $SD = 1.56$  at Wave 1)

From **26 schools**: 13 primary and 13  
secondary schools



Decision-making and moral  
sensitivity in the framework of  
peer networks and the  
phenomenon of bullying: A  
longitudinal study

(PID2020-113911RB-I00)

PI: Eva M. Romera

**2021-2025**



## 5. Intervention Program: MoralMe

Most of meta-analyses have found a **small** but **significant** effect in reducing aggression and victimization in situations of bullying (Gaffney et al., 2019; Hensums et al., 2022; Jiménez-Barbero et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2015; Ng et al., 2022) and cyberbullying (Gaffney et al., 2019; Ng et al., 2022)

Few programs have included the development of **moral competence** among their objectives and none of them have done so from a holistic perspective.

New proposal entitle **MoralMe** developed within the framework of **a proof-of-concept project** funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation and the European Union within the *NextGenerationEU* funds (MoralMe; Ref.: PDC2021-121741-I00)



## 5. Intervention Program: MoralMe

This program is integrated in a wider model, **Building School Convivencia**, developed by our team (LAECОВI). This model is focused on improving the whole school's climate from the progressive construction of a system of interpersonal quality relationships in both off- and on-line settings

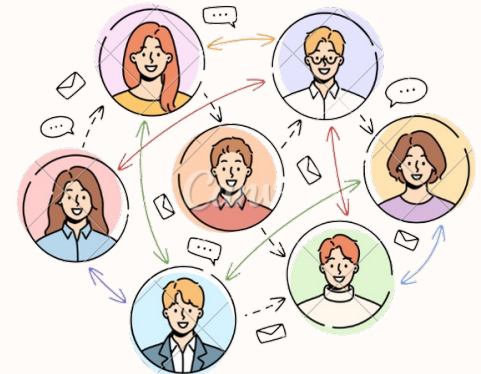
**What are the keys to the MoralMe program (Romera et al., in press)?**



The program is based on the **whole-school approach model**



This means that the entire educational community who interact and are in direct contact with the pupils, should actively involved in the process of creating, adapting, and taking decisions. This included the families



## 5. Intervention Program: MoralMe

### What are the keys to the MoralMe program?



A **continuous** evaluation and adaptation of the program to the school's real situation should be guaranteed



Teaching staff should be trained to **identify** and **manage** their resources, respond to their school and classrooms needs and make decisions adjusted to what is happening in their educational settings



Teaching staff training in the definition of certain dimensions of moral competence and in the use of tools for assessing moral competence and the dynamics of interaction that adolescents build in the classroom.

## 5. Intervention Program: MoralMe

### What are the keys to the MoralMe program?



A psycho-developmental perspective should be considered in organizing the objectives and characteristics of the model

The proposal is **ecological**, considering the individual in their context and how they interact with it

Objectives and sessions proposed for each school level follow a logical sequence and be coherent with each other, based on previous scientific evidence



## 5. Intervention Program: MoralMe

Romera, E., **Bravo, A.**, Camacho, A., & Ortega-Ruiz, R. (accepted). Moral competence in peer relationships: Opportunities for interventions to prevent bullying. In J.S. Hong, H.C.O. Chan, A.L.C. Fung & J. Lee (Eds.), *Handbook of school violence, bullying, and safety*. Edward Elgar Publishing.



¡Anímate!

# Cuidame

Propuesta educativa para el desarrollo  
social, emocional y moral

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# The moral dimension as a key to understand and prevent school bullying

## THANK YOU!!



Research Gate  
profile

Ana Bravo Castillo

[ana.bravo.castillo@uco.es](mailto:ana.bravo.castillo@uco.es)