



**The Hurt Self  
Bullied Children´s Experiences of Social Support,  
Recognition and Trust at School**

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## Abstract

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The aim of this dissertation is to add to the development the knowledge base of bullying research with particular focus on processes of victimization within a Swedish context. The goal is to contribute to understanding the consequences of being bullied by examining patterns of change in bullying victimization over time and how potential positive social interactions and relationships might promote the well-being of bullied children. A mix-methods research design was used, including quantitative data from a one-year longitudinal study, using individual data, from 3,347 pupils (grades 4 to 9, in 44 schools) and five in-depth qualitative interviews with former victims of bullying. From an overview of the research field it was concluded that there is a general shortage of theoretical perspectives within the field of bullying research. Correlation studies have linked negative health consequences with bullying. However, this kind of research design provides few insights into how and why bullied children experience the kinds of problems that they do. By adopting a theoretical understanding of how 'self' is realized through interactions with others, this dissertation moves beyond correlation-based explanations of the mechanisms behind the link between bullying and its consequences in order to be able to offer more targeted support for those schoolchildren who are, or have been subjected to bullying. An argument is made for the importance of understanding the social processes behind bullying. It is argued that being subjected to bullying victimization is a transient life experience for about three quarters of the small cohort (about 7%) of Swedish schoolchildren who are victims of bullying at any one time. The trajectories of bullying experiences these children are unstable. However, the negative consequences are likely to remain even after the bullying has ceased. For others, the persistent victims (1.6%), the state of being bullied may become stable and continue over periods of years. Nevertheless, peers and teachers may serve as important resources in supporting transitory and continuing victims of bullying.

*Keywords:* Bullying victimization, stability, consequence, relationship, recognition, social support, teachers, peers.

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