A REVIEW OF CULTURAL ASPECTS IN BULLYING RESEARCH

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Plan of talk

- Language and Definitions

- Bullying Types and Roles

- Prevalence and Consequences

- Explanations of cross-national differences - EU Kids Online model

- Methodological Issues

- Discussion

(Lee, Smith & Monks, 2012; Monks & Smith, 2006; Smith & Monks, 2008; Smith et al., 2002, 2016a, 2016c, 2018b)

Language & Definitions

- Emphasis of **different aspects of bullying** is reflected in the language used for bullying in different **cultures** and across **time**
- Different emphasis is placed on the physical, relational, group or power imbalance aspects

  - *bullying* in English-speaking countries: **intent to harm, repeated, imbalance of power**
  - *prepotenze* (Italy) - emphasis **physical** aggression
  - *ijime* (Japan) – group-based **social** exclusion
  - *wang-ta* (South Korea) – severe **social** exclusion
  - *qifu* (China - Mandarin) – **power** imbalance

- Most languages: no term that exactly matches 'bullying'
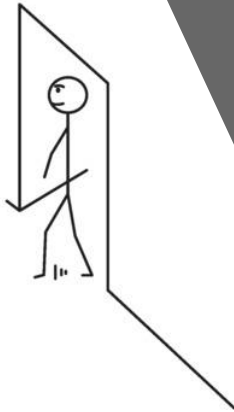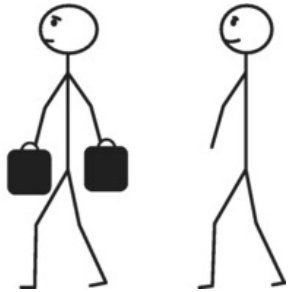
Types of Bullying
(e.g., social exclusion, physical bullying, and indirect bullying)

- All bullying types generally occur across cultures
- There is **variation in** their **relative prevalence**
  - inconsistent pattern across studies
  - emphasis on social exclusion in Eastern compared to Western cultures is not mirrored in actual frequencies
  - possibly stronger emphasis of *group-based* exclusion in Eastern cultures
  - differences in *perceived severity* as opposed to mere frequency
- **Relational aggression**
  - non-Western countries: relational > physical aggression (e.g., Japan, China, Thailand).
  - more girls (e.g., Italy, Sweden) ↔ more boys (e.g., China, Thailand)

(Bradshaw et al. 2017; Lansford et al., 2012; Sittichai & Smith, 2015; Smith et al., 2002, 2016a)
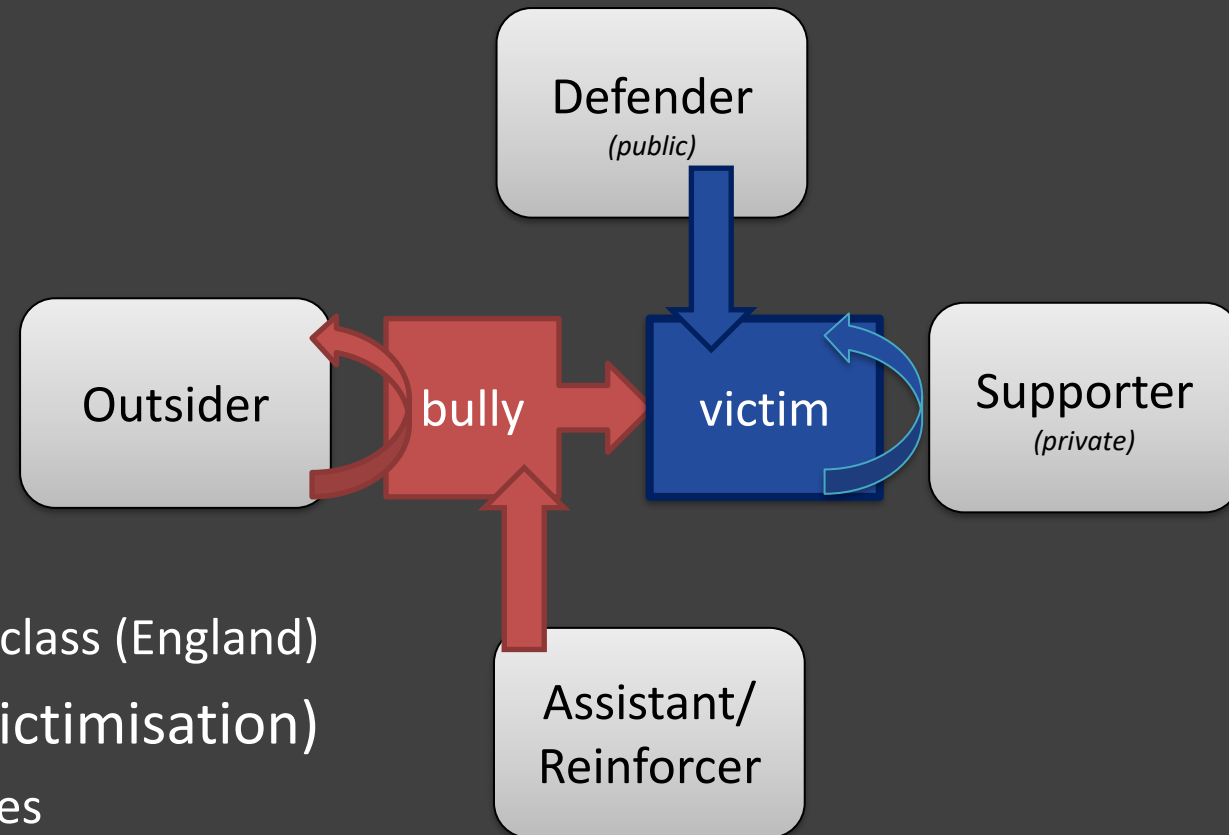
Bullying Roles

bullies, victims, bully-victims – assistants, reinforcers, defenders, outsiders

- Similar relative prevalence across countries

- Ratio of bully/victim rates
  - **≤ 1** in Western cultures
  - **> 1** in most Eastern/ collectivistically oriented cultures.
  - → group-based bullying associated with collectivistic values.

- Age: Bully-victim relation
  - same age and class (Japan), bully older and other class (England)

- Gender: generally boys > girls (bullying and victimisation)
  - not always significant or consistent across countries
  - some studies and countries: stronger prominence of girls in victimisation and cyberbullying prevalence rates

Defender *(public)*

Outsider

bully

victim

Supporter *(private)*

Assistant/ Reinforcer

(Goossens et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2012; Schäfer et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2016a; Strohmeier, Yanagida & Toda, 2016)

Prevalence and Consequences

- 2010 EU Kids Online (**EUKO**; 25 countries): **2%** (Italy, Portugal) to **43%** (Estonia)
- 2013/14 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (**HBSC**; 42 countries): **3%** (Armenia) to **30%** (Lithuania).
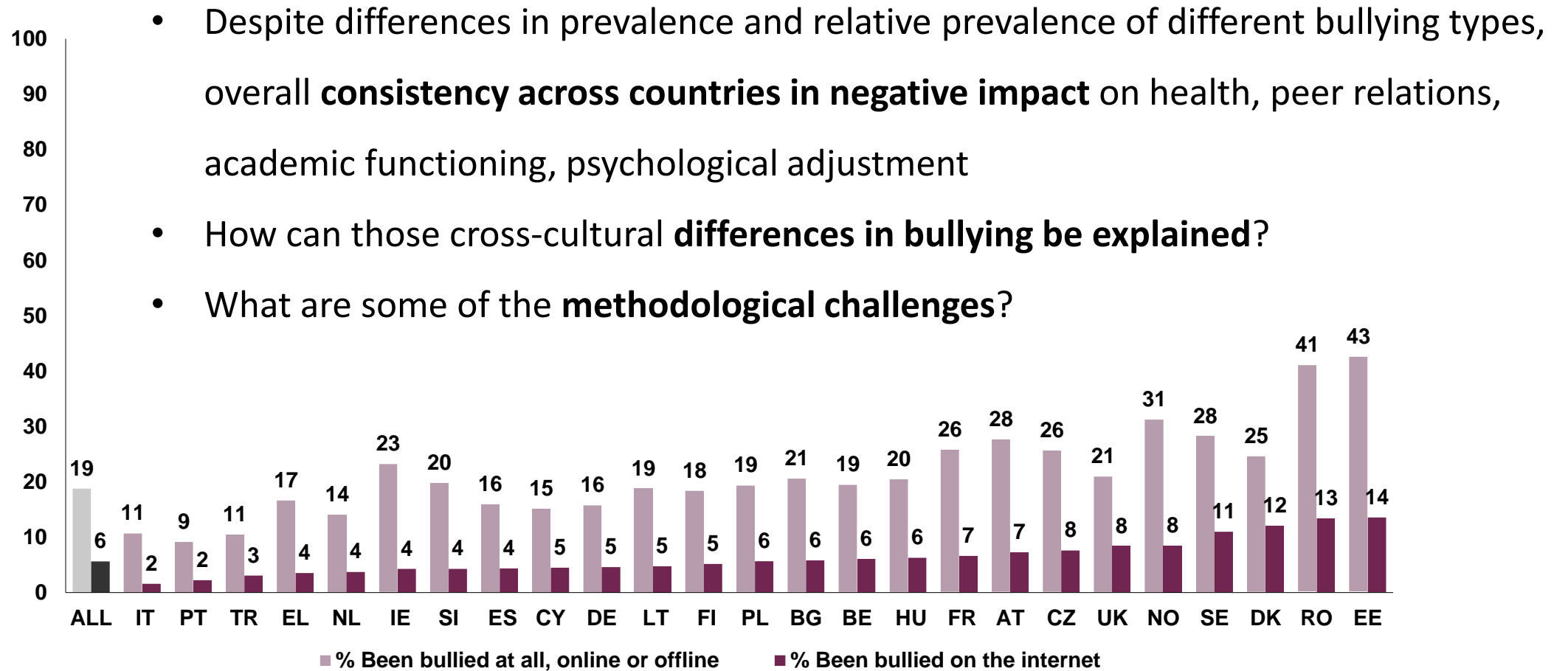
- Despite differences in prevalence and relative prevalence of different bullying types, overall **consistency across countries in negative impact** on health, peer relations, academic functioning, psychological adjustment
- How can those cross-cultural **differences in bullying be explained**?
- What are some of the **methodological challenges**?

% Been bullied at all, online or offline   % Been bullied on the internet

(Inchley et al., 2016 Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig & Ólafsson, 2011; Nansel et al., 2004; Smith et al., 2016a)

EXPLANATIONS OF CROSS-NATIONAL DIFFERENCES: EU KIDS ONLINE MODEL
Country as unit of analysis

•**CULTURAL VALUES** [Hofstede, Gelfand, Schwartz etc]

•**EDUCATION SYSTEM** [levels by age, grade retention, class groupings, school & class size, structure of school day, break times and supervision]

•**TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE** [penetration of mobile phones, smart phones and internet]

•**REGULATORY FRAMEWORK** [school policies, legal aspects, anti-bullying initiatives]

:

•**SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATIFICATION** [GDP, socioeconomic inequality]

Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig & Ólafsson, 2011

Cultural Values and Bullying
Individualism/Collectivism - Hofstede
(1980; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010)

- Individual level
  - **Bullying perpetration**: individualism (+) and collectivism (-) (Wright et al., 2015)

- Country level
  - Individualism: less **victimisation** overall in the last two decades
    - higher regulatory framework in Western countries in more recent time period
  - Individualism: lower **ratio of bullies to victims**
    - emphasis of group-based bullying and group-based exclusion in Eastern/collectivistic cultures (Smith & Robinson, 2019)

Education system

- Higher levels of victimisation in schools with education <u>systems that produce greater achievement differences</u>
(TIMSS, 1994: 37 countries).

- Students from <u>disadvantaged schools</u> more likely to experience bullying victimisation, BUT reversed for Japan, Korea and Macao.

- Proportion of bullied students higher in schools where <u>teachers were perceived as unfair</u>

- Strengths of these association varied by country
(PISA, OECD, 2017; 29 countries)

- Differences in *ijime* (Japan) and *bullying* (England):
supervision of <u>break times</u>, use of <u>home room classes</u> in Japan

  -> indirect, covert bullying; relevance of group identity for severity perceptions of social exclusion (Kanetsuna, 2016)

Technological infrastructure

- More cyberbullying in countries with higher <u>internet usage</u>

- Internet usage - risky online activities link more pronounced in countries with higher <u>mobile phone penetration</u>

(EU Kids Online: 25 countries; Görzig & Machackova; 2016; Görzig & Ólafsson, 2013)

"POLICY IS ALWAYS CHASING TECHNOLOGY."
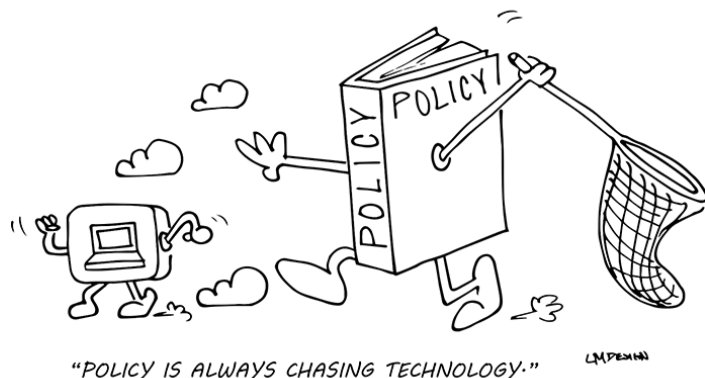
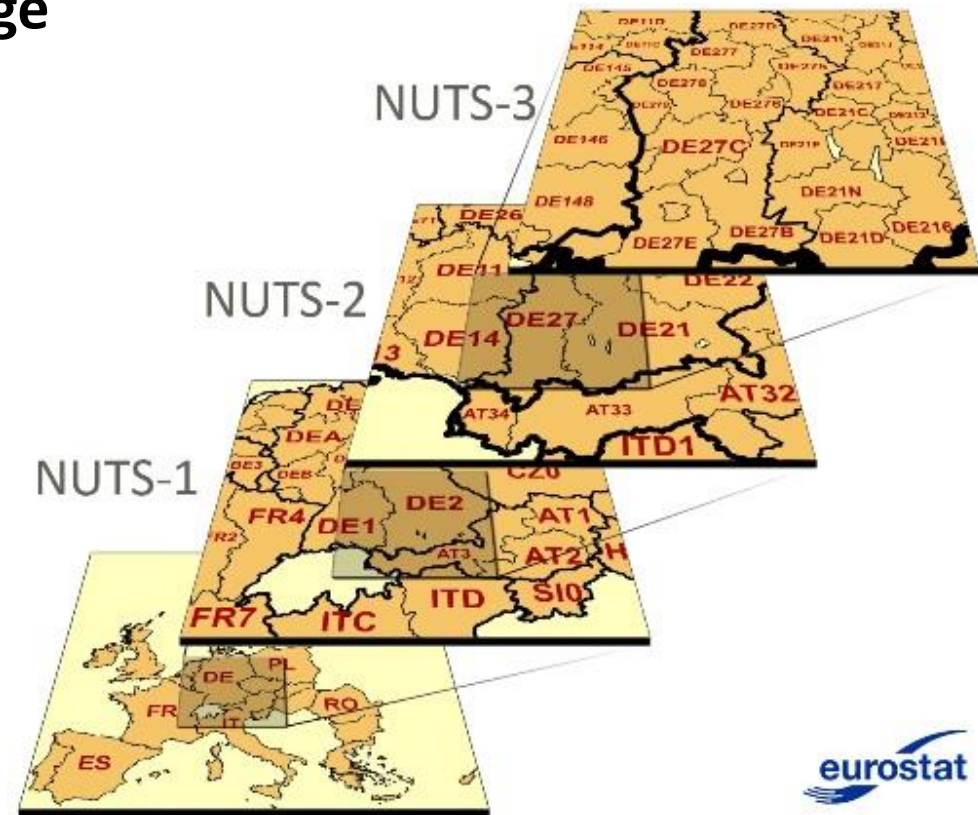# Regulatory System (e.g., anti-bullying policies)

- European countries (Ananiadou & Smith, 2002):
  - Most had legal requirements on school violence in general but few specifically on bullying
  - Provision of anti-bullying materials to schools but large variation in quality between and within countries

- States within U.S. (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2015):
  - States with policies that had a legislative components -> reduced bullying

Socio-economic Stratification

- Higher <u>social inequalities</u> reflected in disparities in socio-economic provision -> more bullying within a society (power imbalance -> SDT; Pratto et al., 2006)

WHO, ESS data linkage

- **Bullying**:
  - income inequalities (Gini index) (+)
  - national level income (GDP) (-)
  - crime rates (+)
  - life expectancies (-)

- **Cyberbullying**
  - national level income (GDP) (+)
  - crime rates (+)
 - life expectancies (-)

Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics

(Due et al., 2009; Elgar et al., 2009, 2015, 2019; Görzig & Machackova, 2016; Görzig et al., 2017; Inchley et al., 2016; Viner et al., 2012)

Methodological Issues: Cross-National Surveys

Five sources of large-scale survey data on victim and sometimes bully rates, cross nationally, all using pupil self-report.

➢ **HEALTH BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN** (**HBSC**) 42 countries

➢ **EU KIDS ONLINE (EUKO**) 25 European countries

➢ **TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE STUDY (TIMSS**) about 63 countries

➢ **GLOBAL SCHOOL HEALTH SURVEY (GSHS**) in about 79 countries

➢ **PROGRAM for INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT (PISA)** – about 29 countries
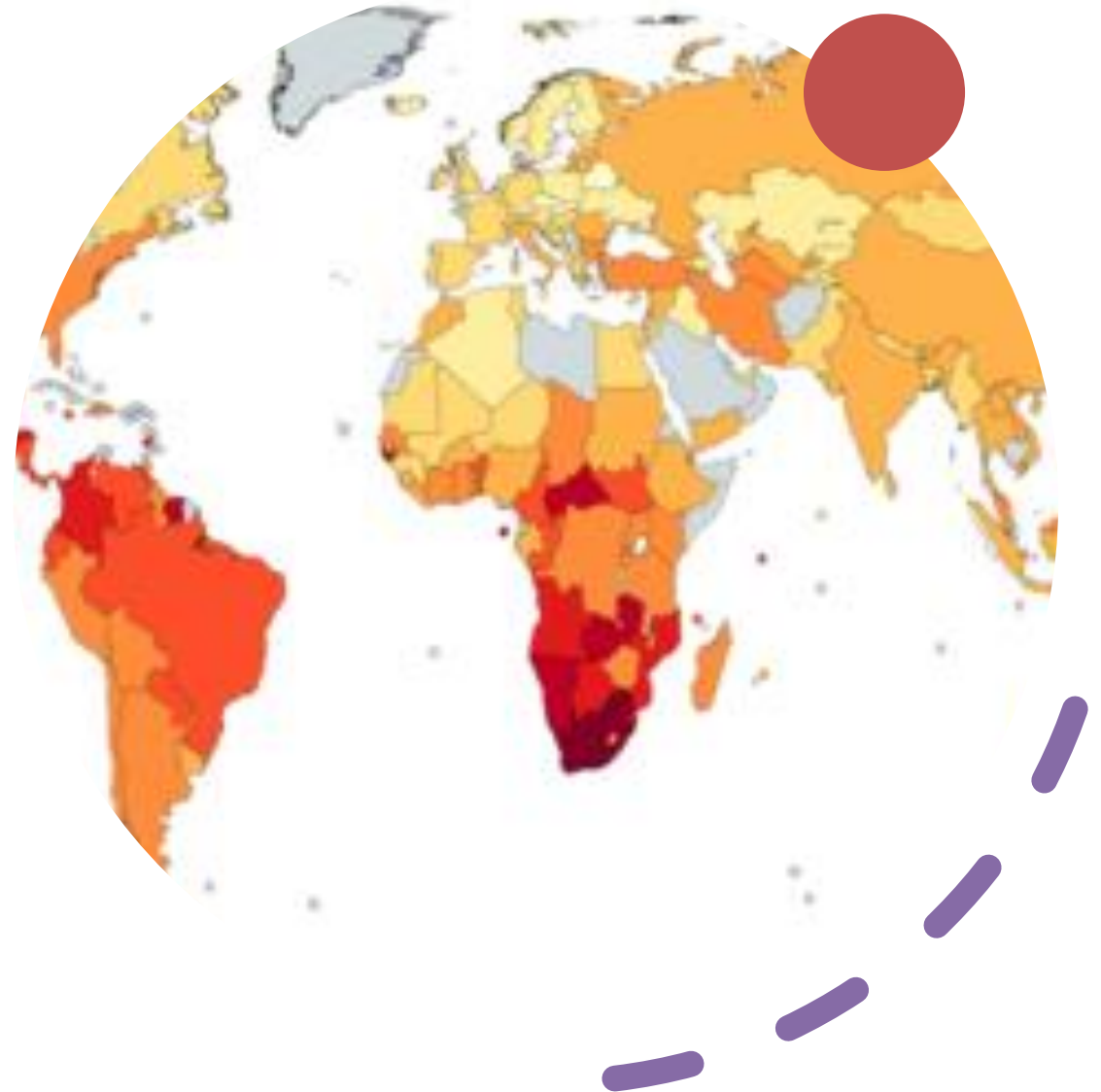
COMPARISONS OF COUNTRY DIFFERENCES ACROSS SURVEYS SHOW LIMITED AGREEMENT

(Smith, Robinson & Marchi, 2016; Smith & López-Castro, 2017)

TIMSS vs HBSC	.32 to .57	moderate
EUKO vs HBSC	.13 to .42	low
EUKO vs TIMSS	.06 to -.28	negative!
TIMSS vs GSHS	.03, .53	moderate
PISA vs HBSC	.15 to .40*	moderate
PISA vs EUKO	.40* to .50*	moderate
PISA vs TIMSS	.22 to .82**	moderate/high
PISA vs GSHS	-.11 to .40	low/moderate

•13

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN COMPARING DIFFERENT SURVEYS
– how can we explain the discrepancies?

- Definition of bullying
- Types of bullying assessed
- Frequency criteria and time reference period
- Single item or scale

Have you acted in a way that <u>might have felt hurtful or nasty to someone else</u> in the PAST 12 MONTHS?
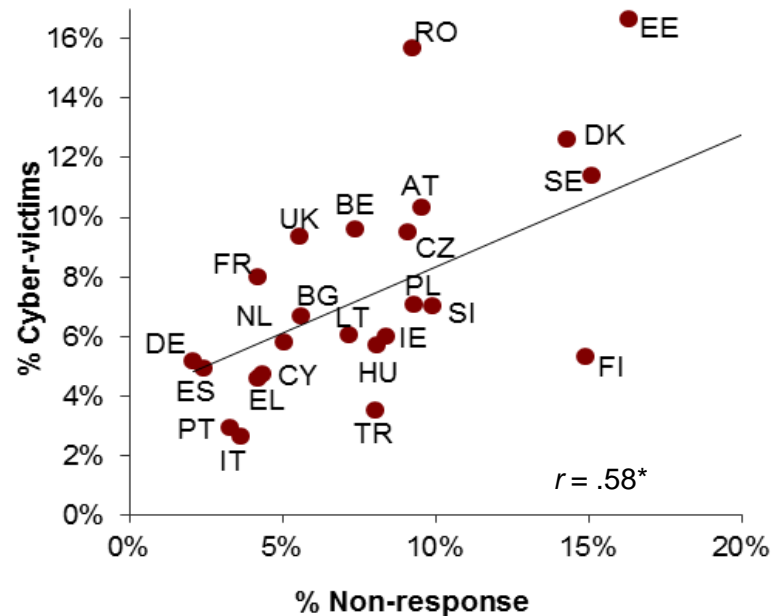
PLEASE <u>TICK ONE BOX</u> ONLY

Yes ☐ **Answer questions on next page**

No ☐

Don't know ☐ **Go straight to section D**

Prefer not to say ☐

$r = .58*$

- Sample characteristics – age, gender, national representation, use of internet
- Non-response rates
- Linguistic issues – translation of 'bullying'

Smith, P. K., Görzig, A. & Robinson, S. (2019).

Summary

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- Differences in cultural aspects of bullying are partially reflected in terminology, relative prevalence rates and interpretations of severity

- Communalities in consequences of bullying are greater than differences

- Country level structures and customs affect specific characteristics of bullying dynamics and perceptions. These need to be considered for interventions

- Cross-national survey results need to be interpreted with caution being mindful of methodological issues

THANK YOU!!

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