

CROSS-NATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN BULLYING – HOW WE CAN MEASURE THEM AND HOW TO EXPLAIN THEM



PETER K SMITH, GOLDSMITHS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, U.K.

p.smith@gold.ac.uk

Graz Specialist Conference, October 2019

1

PLAN OF THE TALK

- School bullying as an international issue
- Cross-national comparisons; larger surveys
- Measurement issues [within a survey]
 - equivalence; bias
- Issues in comparing different surveys
- Explanations of cross-national differences



SCHOOL BULLYING AS AN INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

bullying in English-speaking countries: **intent to harm, repeated, imbalance of power**

mobbing/mobbing in Scandinavian countries

pesten in Netherlands

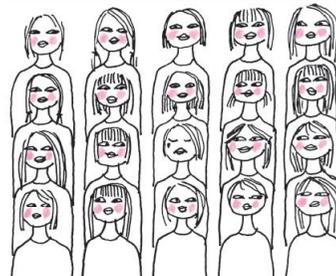
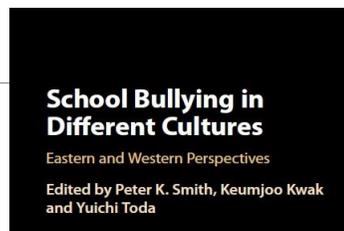
schikanieren in Germany

gemein sein in Austria

ijime in Japan

wang-ta in South Korea

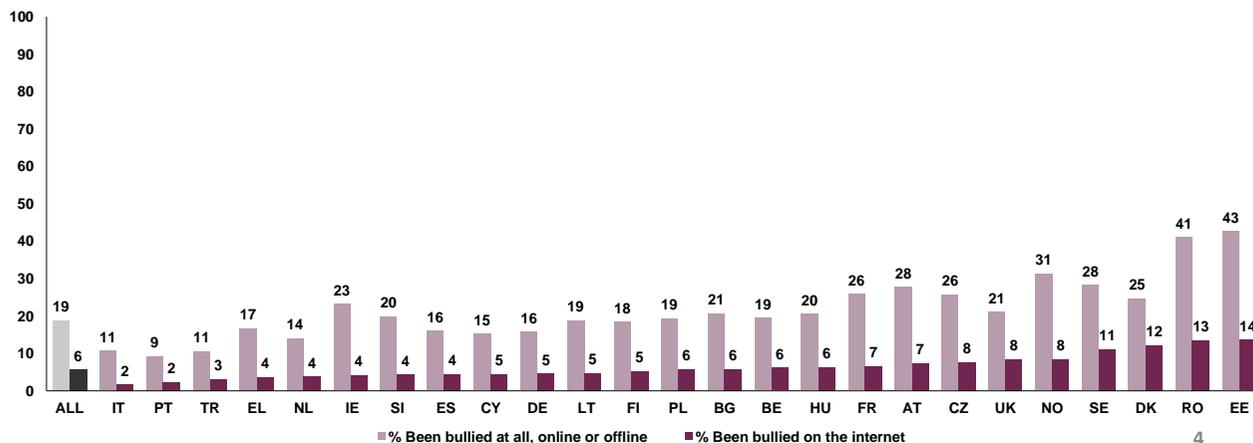
qifu in China (Mandarin)



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COUNTRIES

Victimisation in past 12 months EU KIDS ONLINE (2010)

Prevalence estimates range from 9% to 43% (2% to 14% for online) across 25 countries (Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig & Ólafsson, 2011)



SCHOOL BULLYING AS AN INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

Absolutist (etic) approach – the same everywhere

Universalist approach – some similarities, some differences

Relativist approach – unique to each culture



5

SIMILARITIES and DIFFERENCES

SIMILARITIES

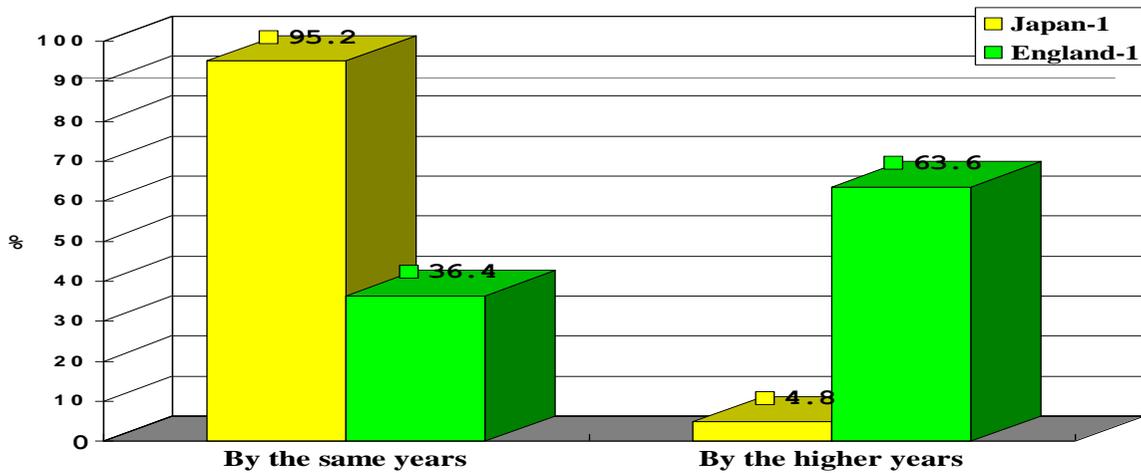
- Concept criteria [intent to harm, repetition, imbalance of power]
- Main types [physical, verbal, exclusion, relational, cyber]
- Age changes
- Gender differences
- Negative outcomes of being a victim

DIFFERENCES

- Who bullies whom (e.g. same age or older to younger)
- Where bullying happens [classroom or playground]
- Weighting of types [e.g. social exclusion more important in Japan, South Korea]
- Ratio of bullies to victims

6

WHO BULLIES WHOM: JAPAN cf ENGLAND: year group



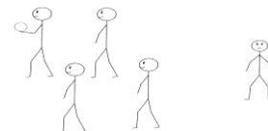
7

Behavior or definition?

CARTOON TEST: Using age/grade as justification

The rest of the team won't let Millie take part in a competition, even though she is one of the best players, because she is from a lower year group.

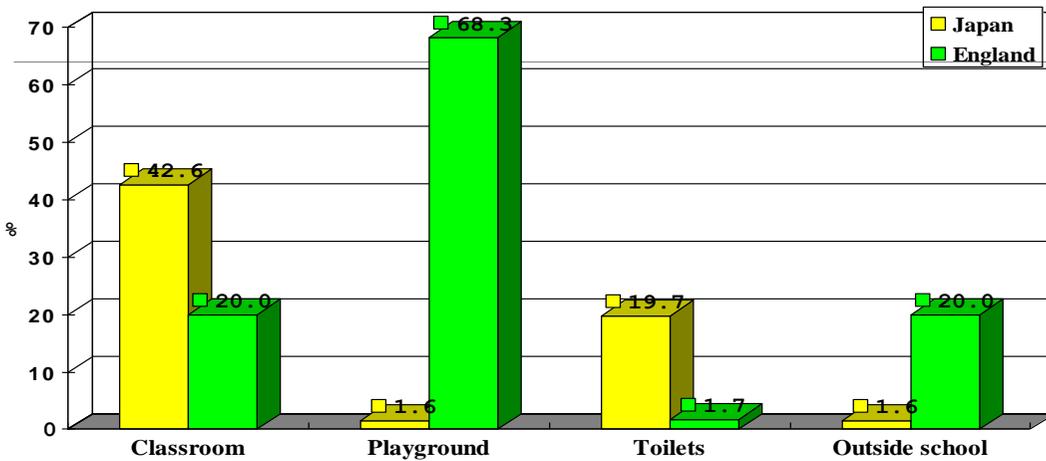
Lowest for *ijime*; highest for western terms



Ijime	Wang-ta	Bully Eng /Can	Einelti	Qifu	Hayan	Ghunda pan	Zorbalik
29	49	81 / 69	64	46	62	77	46

8

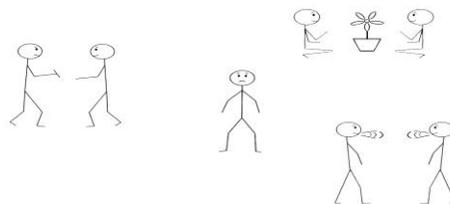
WHERE BULLYING TAKES PLACE: JAPAN cf ENGLAND:



9

Weighting of types
 CARTOON TEST: Severe social exclusion

No one wants to be with Julia for a paired activity.



Highest for *wang-ta* and *ijime*

Ijime	Wang-ta	Bully Eng /Can	Einelti	Qifu	Hayan	Ghunda pan	Zorbalik
76	85	56 / 36	56	32	14	56	31

10

Many small scale comparisons - but Five Large Cross-National Surveys give data on many countries

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

- EU KIDS ONLINE (**EUKO**) given in 25 European countries in 2010
- GLOBAL SCHOOL HEALTH SURVEY (**GSHS**) given on irregular basis in about 79 countries (varies by country: data between 2005 to 2012)
- TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE STUDY (**TIMSS**) given every 4 years in about 63 countries
- HEALTH BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN (**HBSC**) given every 4 years in about 42 countries
- PROGRAM for INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT (**PISA**) – latest survey in 2016 includes pupil self-report data

Examples of surveys questions

EU KIDS ONLINE

(VERSION FOR 11-16 YEARS OLD)

SECTION B

EVERYONE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

PLEASE READ: Sometimes children or teenagers say or do hurtful or nasty things to someone and this can often be quite a few times on different days over a period of time, for example. This can include:

- teasing someone in a way this person does not like
- hitting, kicking or pushing someone around
- leaving someone out of things

When people are hurtful or nasty to someone in this way, it can happen:

- face to face (in person)
- by mobile phones (texts, calls, video clips)
- on the internet (e-mail, instant messaging, social networking, chatrooms)

112. Has someone acted in this kind of hurtful or nasty way to you in the PAST 12 MONTHS?

Answer question on next page

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

A Yes

B No

C Don't know

D Prefer not to say

Go straight to section C

How did it happen...

ONLY ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON THIS PAGE IF SOMEONE HAS DONE HURTFUL OR NASTY THINGS TO YOU IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

EVERYONE ELSE GO TO STRAIGHT TO SECTION C

113. How often has someone acted in this kind of way towards you in the PAST 12 MONTHS?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

A Every day or almost every day

B Once or twice a week

C Once or twice a month

D Less often

E Don't know

115. At any time during the last 12 months has this happen on the internet?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

A Yes Answer questions on next page

B No Go straight to section C

C Don't know

Examples of surveys questions

GSHS

The next 2 questions ask about bullying. Bullying occurs when a student or group of students say or do bad and unpleasant things to another student. It is also bullying when a student is teased a lot in an unpleasant way or when a student is left out of things on purpose. It is not bullying when two students of about the same strength or power argue or fight or when teasing is done in a friendly and fun way.

20. During the past 30 days, on how many days were you bullied?
- A. 0 days
 - B. 1 or 2 days
 - C. 3 to 5 days
 - D. 6 to 9 days
 - E. 10 to 19 days
 - F. 20 to 29 days
 - G. All 30 days

21. During the past 30 days, how were you bullied most often?
- A. I was not bullied during the past 30 days
 - B. I was hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors
 - C. I was made fun of because of my race or color
 - D. I was made fun of because of my religion
 - E. I was made fun of with sexual jokes, comments, or gestures
 - F. I was left out of activities on purpose or completely ignored
 - G. I was made fun of because of how my body or face looks
 - H. I was bullied in some other way

Examples of surveys questions

TIMSS

(version for 8th grade)

15

During this year, how often have any of the following things happened to you at school?

Fill in one oval for each line.

- | | At least
once a
week | Once or
twice
a month | A few
times
a year | Never |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| a) I was made fun of or called names | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| b) I was left out of games or activities by other students | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| c) Someone spread lies about me | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| d) Something was stolen from me | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| e) I was hit or hurt by other student(s) (e.g., shoving, hitting, kicking) | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |
| f) I was made to do things I didn't want to do by other students | ① | ② | ③ | ④ |

Example of surveys question

HBSC

Item box 3

MQ41 How often have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months?

- I have not been bullied at school in the past couple of months
- It has only happened once or twice
- 2 or 3 times a month
- About once a week
- Several times a week

Source: HBSC surveys 1993/94, 1997/98. Revised in 2001/02 to conform with: Olweus²⁸

PISA

During the past 12 months, how often did you have the following experiences at school?
(Please select one response in each row.)

	Never or almost never	A few times a year	A few times a month	Once a week or more
I got called names by other students.				
I got picked on by other students.				
Other students left me out of things on purpose.				
Other students made fun of me.				
I was threatened by other students.				
Other students took away or destroyed things that belonged to me.				
I got hit or pushed around by other students.				
Other students spread nasty rumors about me.				

STUDIES ON CROSS-NATIONAL DIFFERENCES USING ONE SURVEY SOURCE

Various studies have focused on these cross-national differences, in relation to characteristics and correlates such as school achievement,, family life, country GDP and income inequality ...for example using **HBSC**:

Due et al. (2009). Socioeconomic inequality in exposure to bullying during adolescence: a comparative, cross-sectional, multilevel study in 35 countries. *American Journal of Public Health*, 99, 907-914.

Elgar et al. (2009). Income inequality and school bullying: Multilevel study of adolescents in 37 countries. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 45, 351-359.

17

STUDIES ON CROSS-NATIONAL DIFFERENCES USING ONE SURVEY SOURCE

Using **GSHS**

Fleming & Jacobsen (2010). Bullying among middle-school students in low and middle income countries. *Health Promotion International*, 25, 73-84.

Wilson, Dunlavy & Berchtold (2013). Determinants for bullying victimization among 11-16-year-olds in 15 low- and middle-income countries: A multi-level study. *Social Sciences*, 2, 208-220.

Using **TIMSS**

Lai, Ye & Chang (2008). Bullying in middle schools: An Asian-Pacific regional study. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 9, 393-405.

18

ISSUES IN COMPARING WITHIN A SURVEY : EQUIVALENCE [Guillaume & Funder, 2016]

Construct equivalence – does the phenomenon exist in other cultures?

[does bullying happen in other cultures?]

Structural equivalence – is the pattern of factor loadings similar?

[is bullying represented by the same types of behaviours in different cultures, e.g. physical, verbal, exclusion, cyber ...]

Measurement equivalence – are the factor loadings of equal strength?

[do types of bullying vary in importance in different cultures?]

19

ISSUES IN COMPARING WITHIN A SURVEY : BIAS [Guillaume & Funder, 2016]

Differences in perception/response rather than in the phenomenon itself:

Administration bias – e.g. physical setting; on- or off-line testing; experimenter effects

Response styles – socially desirable responding; extreme responding

Translation issues, idioms, familiarity with items

Reference group effects – compare yourself to norms of the culture you are in.

20

COMPARISON OF DIFFERENT SURVEYS – they should all be measuring the same construct of victim rates

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

Cross-national data On victim rates: What is really being measured?

4 countries with obvious discrepancies between the EUKO and HBSC surveys

SWEDEN: 4= highest out of 25 in EUKO; 3rd lowest (36/38) in HBSC (2009/10, age 13)

CZECH REPUBLIC:

6= highest out of 25 in EUKO; 4th lowest (35/38) in HBSC (2009/10, age 13)

LITHUANIA: 15th = out of 25 in EUKO; highest (1/38) in HBSC (2009/10, age 13)

PORTUGAL: lowest out of 25 in EUKO; 10th highest (10/38) in HBSC (2009/10, age 13)

21

49 COUNTRIES



These four survey sample different sets of countries, but there is considerable measure of overlap. The following countries are in more than one survey, but each analysis is based on the countries that overlap in the surveys concerned.

Armenia	France	Malta	Spain
Austria	Germany	Morocco	Sweden
Belgium Flemish	Greece	Netherlands	Thailand
Belgium French	Hungary	Norway	Tunisia
Botswana	Indonesia	Oman	Turkey
Bulgaria	Ireland	Philippines	Ukraine
Canada	Italy	Poland	United Arab Emirates
Chile	Jordan	Portugal	UK/England
Croatia	Kuwait	Qatar	USA
Czech Republic	Lebanon	Romania	Yemen
Denmark	Lithuania	Russia	
Estonia	Macedonia	Slovak Republic	
Finland	Malaysia	Slovenia	

22

HOW INTERNALLY VALID ARE THESE SURVEYS?

We established evidence for **internal validity** of cross-national differences **within each survey** (in terms of consistency across age, gender, frequency cut-off) – these were all very high

For example, correlations across ages from HBSC

	HBSC15 F/M	
	HBSC13 F/M	
HBSC11 F/M	0.92**	0.83**
HBSC13 F/M		0.92**

All the surveys show high internal consistency, typically around $r=0.9$, across the types of comparisons we have made.

23

HOW ABOUT EXTERNAL VALIDITY?

- SUMMARY OF COMPARISONS ACROSS SURVEYS

We correlated victim rates from EUKO, GSHS, TIMSS, HBSC, and PISA surveys across countries where there is overlap, as a test of **external validity**.

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

SO – look at consistency of findings across various surveys ...

24

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

Definition of bullying

Types of bullying assessed

Different versions by age

Frequency criteria and time reference period

Single item or scale

Year of survey

Group survey or face-to-face

Sample characteristics – age, gender, national representation, use of internet

Non-response rates :

Linguistic issues – translation of ‘bullying’

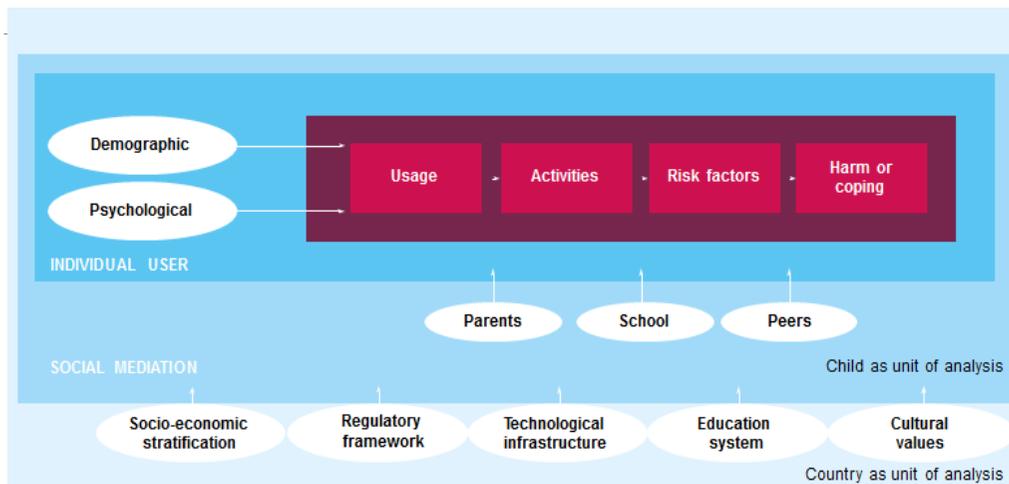
25

IMPLICATIONS

- Be cautious about judging how countries appear in terms of high or low prevalence rates - especially if only one survey is relied on; claims would be more convincing if two or even three surveys agreed on a country's relative position
- More research is needed into why there is a lack of high agreement amongst the surveys.
- In future surveys, TIMSS, GSHS HBSC and PISA may need to revise their definitions and examples to include
 - online or cyberbullying [HBSC have done so partially for 2013/14];
 - rumour-spreading [PISA includes this]
- Provide more details of non-response rates [only easily available for GSHS].
- Say how the term ‘bullying’ is translated into different languages [for GSHS and HBSC].

26

EXPLANATIONS OF CROSS-NATIONAL DIFFERENCES: EU KIDS ONLINE MODEL



27

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATIFICATION

- [GDP, socioeconomic inequality]

Examined primarily with HBS data.

Prevalence rates linked to lower country wealth (Chaux *et al.*, 2009; Elgar *et al.*, 2009; Viner *et al.*, 2012)

and greater income inequality (Elgar *et al.*, 2009, 2015; Pells, Ogando Portela, & Espinoza, 2016; Viner *et al.*, 2012).

Using a sample of 18 countries from EUKO, Görzig, Milosevic and Staksrud (2017) found that regional level cyber-victimisation rates were positively linked with GDP and crime rates whilst they showed a negative relationship with life expectancy and population density.

28

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- [school policies, legal aspects, anti-bullying initiatives]

Limited evidence on the quality of school anti-bullying policies affecting general victim rates (Smith *et al.*, 2012).

In the USA, Hatzenbuehler *et al.* (2015) found that having some anti-bullying laws was associated with reduced rates of being both bullied and cyberbullied across 25 states. Ramirez *et al.* (2016) found an increase in victim rates in Iowa state after an anti-bullying law was introduced, possibly due to increased reporting, but then a decrease for offline but not online victim rates.

29

TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

[penetration of mobile phones, smart phones and internet]

Most relevant for cyberbullying.

Görzig and Ólafsson (2013) found that the relationship between risky online activities and cyberbullying was stronger in countries with higher mobile phone penetration.

Use of other media beyond the internet may be important: Calvete *et al.* (2010), in Spain, and Fanti *et al.*, (2012), in Cyprus, found links from violent media exposure (on television, internet, movies, video games), to both cyber bullying and cyber victimization, and Hamer *et al.* (2014) suggested a 'Cyclic Process' model of this.

30

EDUCATION SYSTEM

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

Some effects on victim and bully rates have been documented, for example Kanetsuna (2016) invoked use of home room classes, and supervision of break times, in explaining differences between *ijime* in Japan and *bullying* in England. Grade retention, whereby pupils performing less well are held back in a grade, has been linked to bullying rates in Portugal (Pereira *et al.*, 2004).

31

CULTURAL VALUES

Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) proposed 6 main dimensions of cultural values:

power distance,

individualism-collectivism,

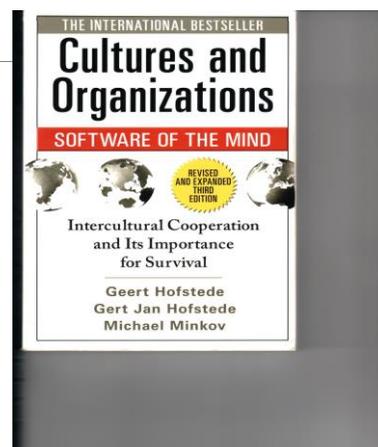
masculinity-femininity,

uncertainty avoidance,

long-term orientation,

Indulgence vs. restraint.

[BUT recent criticisms by Minkov and others]



32

IDV: individualism refers to societies with loose ties, where individuals are expected to look after themselves and immediate family; whereas in *collectivism*, people are integrated from birth onward into strong cohesive in-groups which protect them in exchange for loyalty to the group.

Generally hypothesized that bullying would be higher in IDV societies - but not the case – almost all correlations of Hofstede IDV with victim rates are negative.

Smith & Robinson (2019) hypothesized that the negative correlations of IDV with bullying might be because high IDV societies had introduced more *Regulatory Framework* elements in this century (policies, laws, resources, interventions).

MAS (Masculinity Index): a more *masculine* society is one where gender roles are distinct (less overlapping) and men are more assertive, tough, and focused on material success, while women are more modest and tender.

high MAS predicts higher Bully and Victim rates generally

high MAS predicts greater M-F ratio in Bully and Victim rates

high MAS predicts relatively more sexist/sexual bullying

high MAS predicts more sexting

- Much evidence comes from HBSC, but also 4 other surveys
- Contrary to expectations, Victim rates tend to be less in high MAS societies, especially for females, but the M:F ratio may be slightly higher
- Only substantial effect size is less sexting in high MAS societies

SUMMARY (1)

- ❖ A **universalist** position on *bullying* appears justified – there are important similarities and differences across cultures.
- ❖ A number of studies have made comparisons across cultures:
 - Small scale - usually small samples, and cultures differ in many respects
 - Larger-scale –with EUKO, GSHS, TIMSS, HBSC, or PISA – which are each internally valid but which show limited agreement where countries overlap.

35

SUMMARY (2)

- ❖ Many issues around measurement and bias, within a survey; and other issues in comparing different surveys.
- ❖ When differences are reasonably well substantiated (e.g. from different studies/surveys) then we need to try and understand them.
- ❖ The five factor model from EUKO provides one way of exploring such explanations.

36

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to

- Geert Hofstede and Anke Goerzig for advice on sampling procedures
- Susanne Robinson, Ayako Onishi, Leticia Lopez and Barbara Marchi for help with collation of data