

BULLYING AT SCHOOL

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OLWEUS-GRUPPEN
MOT MOBBING

Europejski Kongres Przeciwdziałania Przemocy Szkolnej
„Szkoła bez przemocy” 15 września 2010
Wykład prof. Dan Olweus

BASIC DEFINITION OF BULLYING (i)

(VICTIMIZATION OR PEER ABUSE)

A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. (Olweus, 1986, 1993)

- **Negative action:**
 - **when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another (aggressive behaviour)**

GENERAL DEFINITION OF SCHOOL BULLYING

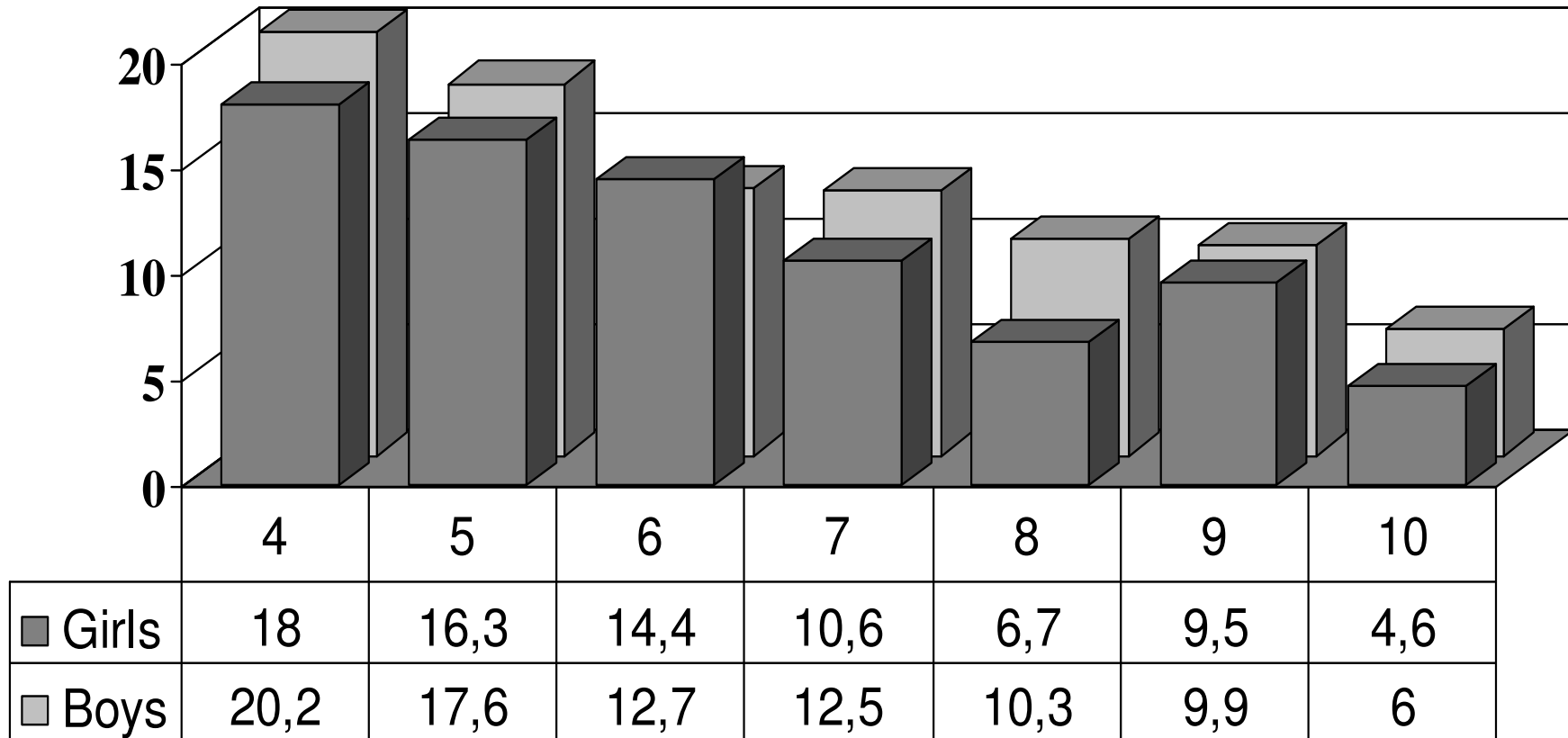
Intentional, repeated negative (unpleasant or hurtful) behaviour by one or more persons directed against a person who has difficulty defending himself or herself (who feels vulnerable, more or less helpless).

Three key criteria:

- **intentional harm-doing**
- **repeated over time**
- **an imbalance of actual or perceived power implied**

The bullying usually occurs without apparent provocation on the part of the student exposed (Olweus, 1999) – a form of proactive aggression.

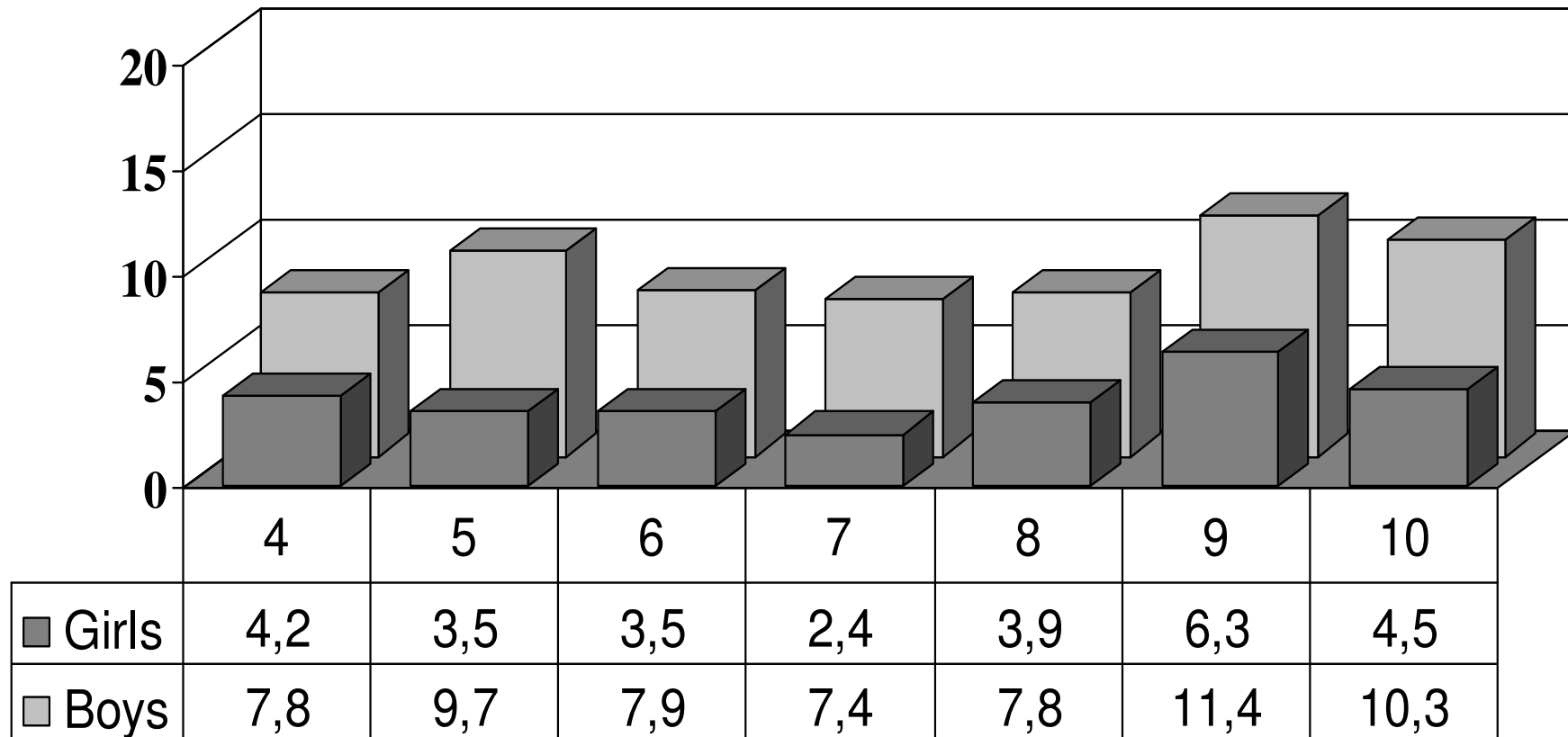
PERCENTAGE VICTIMIZED STUDENTS (N=10 800)



Grades 4 - 7 (Boys + Girls) = 15,2%

Grades 8-10 (Boys + Girls) = 8,0%

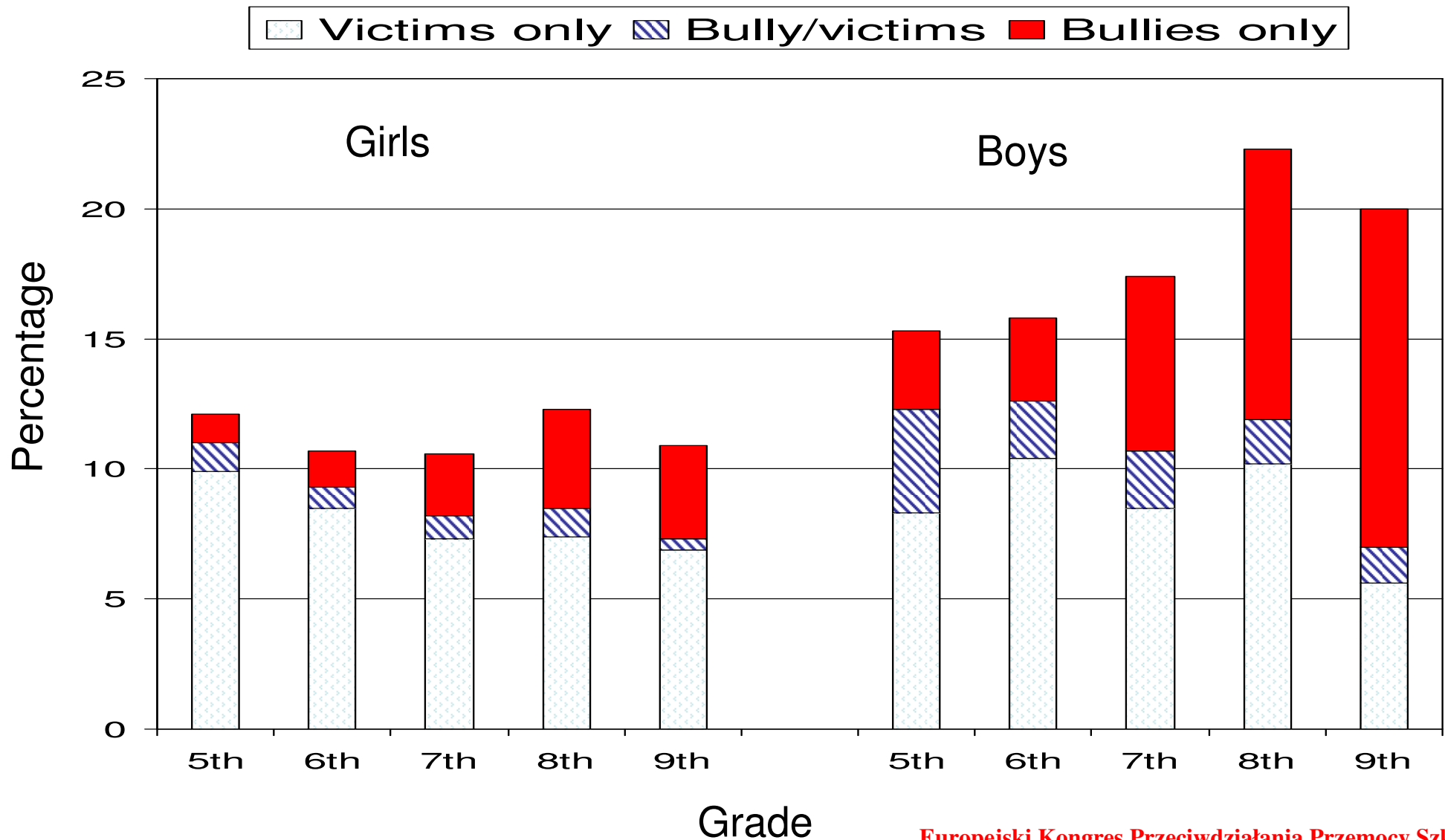
PERCENTAGE BULLYING STUDENTS (N= 10 800)



Grades 4-7 (Boys + Girls)= 5,8%

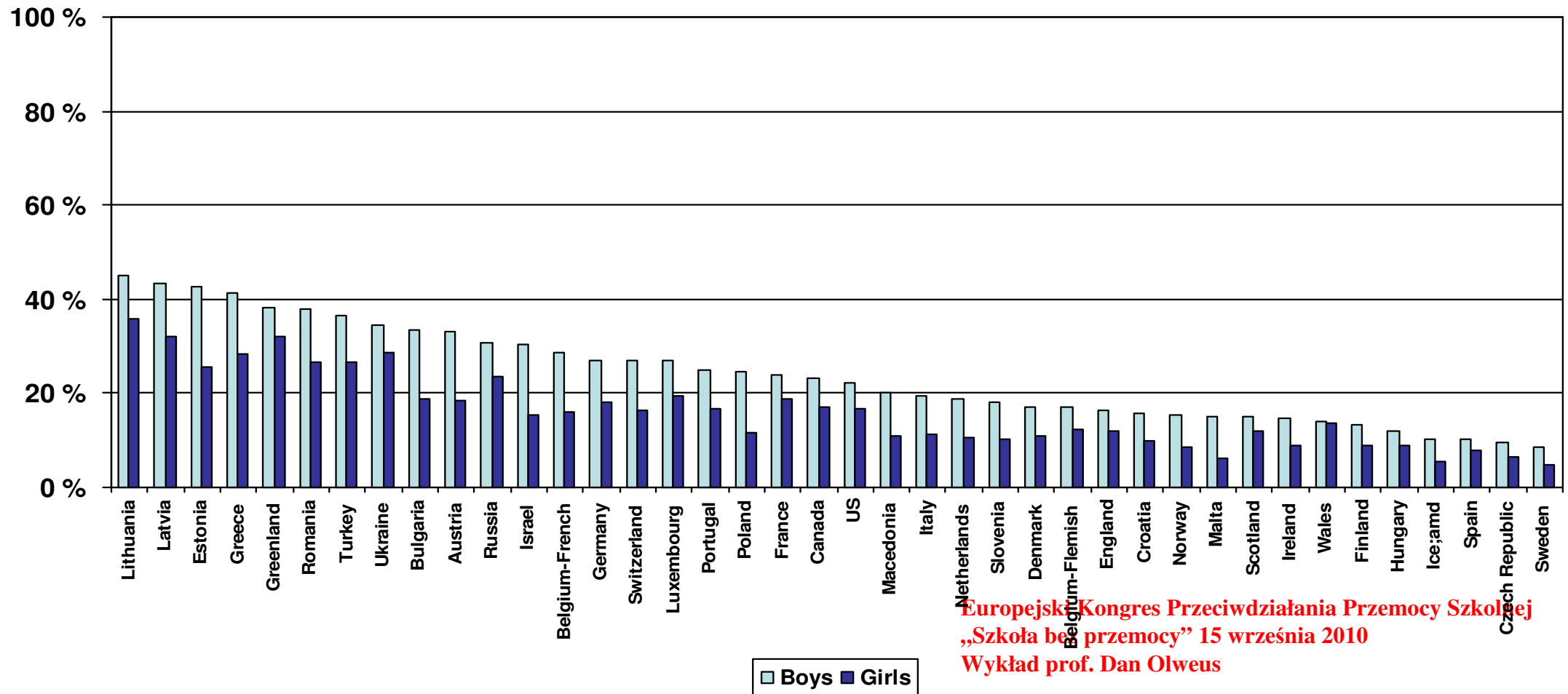
Grades 8-10 (Boys + Girls)= 7,4%

Figure 3: Prevalence of Victims Only, Bully-Victims and Bullies Only: Percentage of all Girls and Boys in Grades 5 through 9 (N=4896).



Percentage of Students Being Involved in Bullying as Victims only, Bullies only or Bully-Victims

41 Nation Study of 11, 13 & 15-Year-Old School Children (Craig et al., 2009)



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VICTIMS ONLY/SUBMISSIVE VICTIMS

USUALLY HAVE SOME OF THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:

- are cautious, sensitive, quiet, withdrawn and shy
- are anxious, insecure, unhappy, and have low self-esteem
- are depressed and engage in suicidal ideation much more often than their peers
- often do not have a single good friend and may relate better to adults than to peers
- if they are boys, they are often physically weaker than their peers

BULLIES ONLY

USUALLY HAVE SOME OF THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:

- strong needs to dominate and subdue other students and to get their own way
- are impulsive and easily angered
- show little empathy toward students who are victimised
- are often defiant and aggressive toward adults, including parents and teachers
- are often involved in other antisocial or rule-breaking activities such as vandalism, delinquency, and drug use
- if they are boys, they are often physically stronger than boys in general and than victims in particular

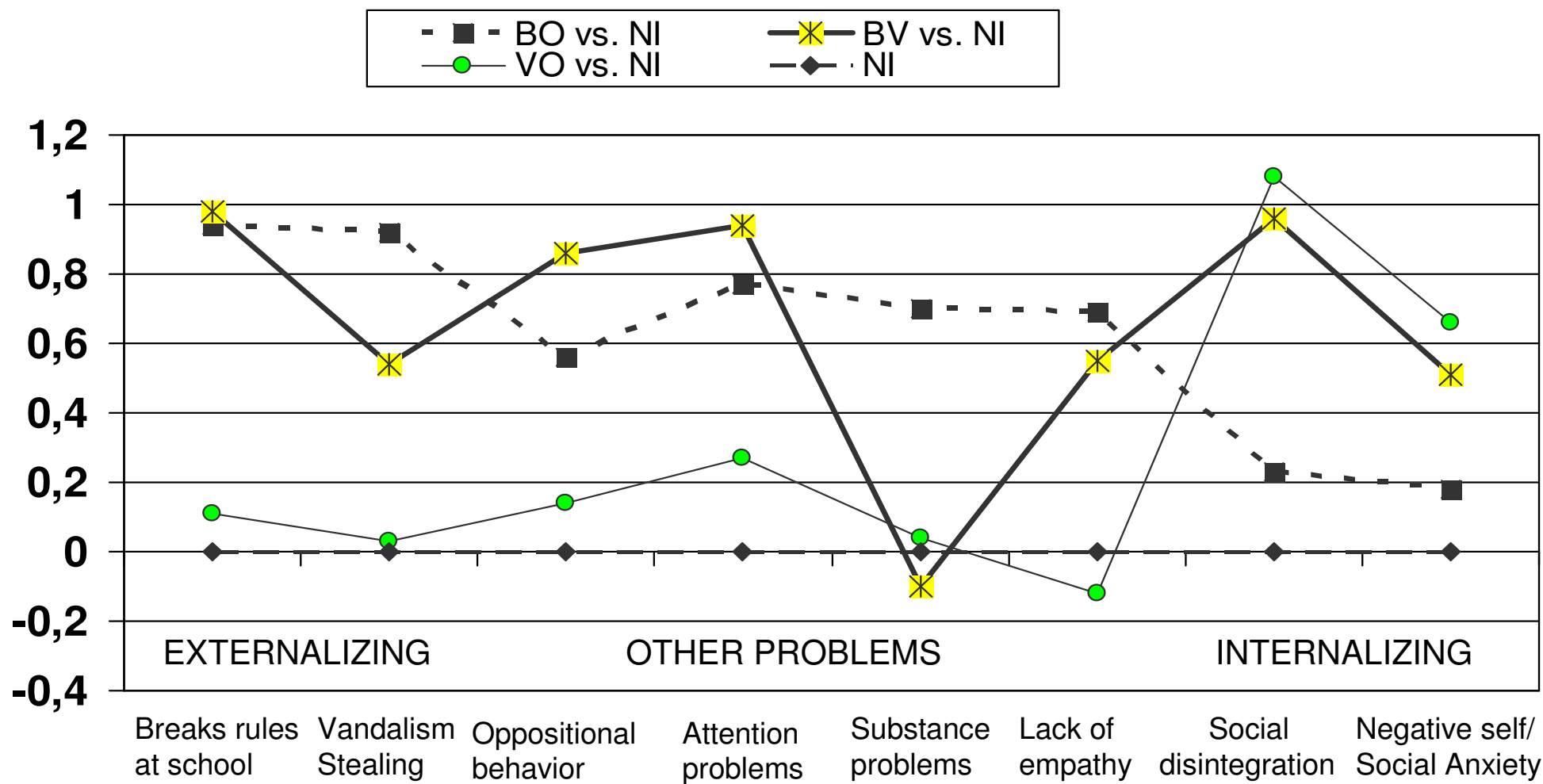
In contrast to what is commonly believed, they do not have special problems with their self-esteem.

BULLY-VICTIMS/PROVOCATIVE VICTIMS

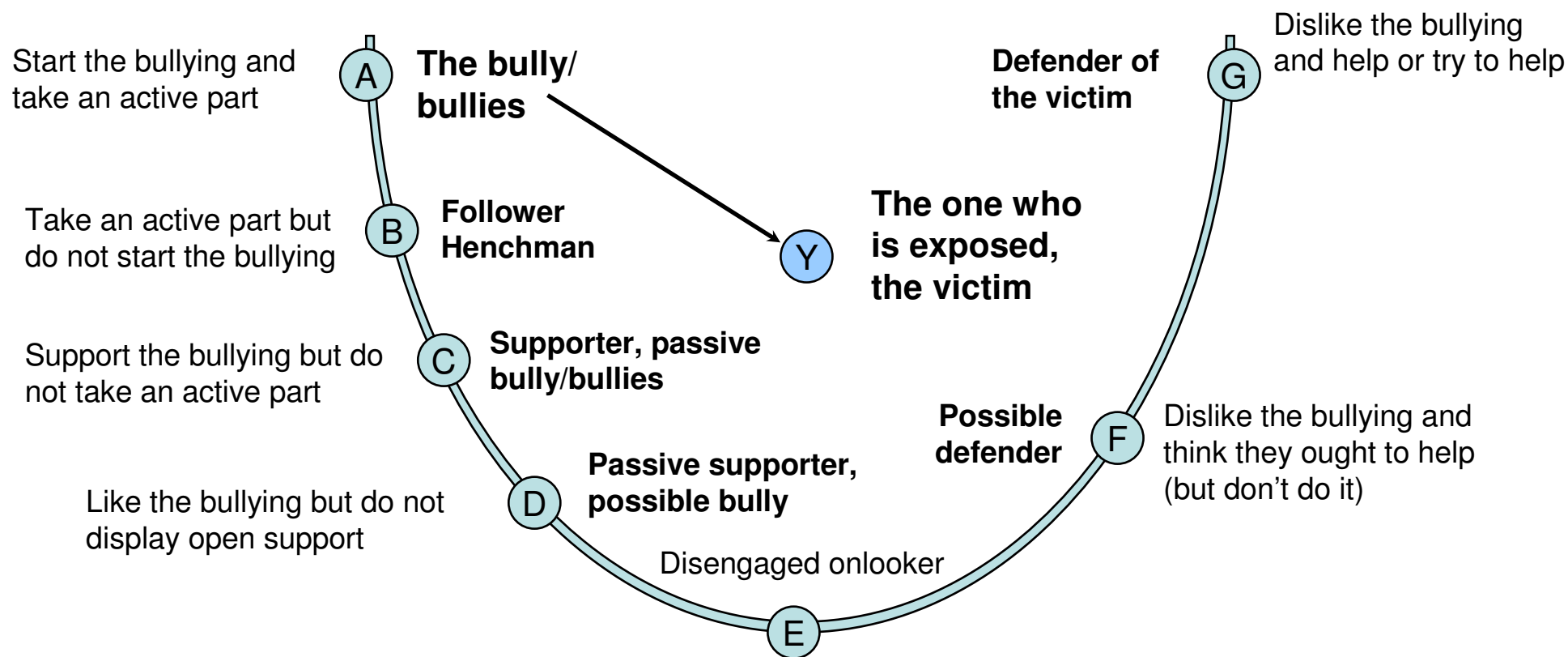
HAVE CHARACTERISTICS OF BOTH VICTIMS ONLY AND BULLIES ONLY

- are anxious, insecure, unhappy, depressed and have low self-esteem
- may be hot-headed and oppositional and try to aggress back but not very effectively
- are often involved in other antisocial and rulebreaking activities but to a somewhat lesser degree than bullies only
- may be hyperactive, restless, and have concentration problems (ADHD) and are perceived as generally tension-creating
- disliked by peers (and often teachers) and socially isolated

Fig. 4: Bullies Only (BO) vs. Not-Involved (NI), Bully-Victims (BV) vs. Not-Involved, Victims Only (VO) vs. Not-Involved: Effect sizes in primary grades



THE BULLYING CIRCLE: Students' modes of reaction/roles in an acute bullying situation



IMPORTANT SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS

- **SOCIAL CONTAGION**
- **WEAKENING OF NORMAL CONTROLS/INHIBITIONS AGAINST AGGRESSIVE TENDENCIES**
- **DIFFUSION OF RESPONSIBILITY**
- **GRADUAL COGNITIVE CHANGES**

EFFECTS OF THE OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM (OBPP)

The first evaluation of the effects of the Olweus BP Program was based on data from approximately 2500 students in 42 primary and junior high schools (grade s 5-8) in Bergen, Norway, followed over a period of 2 years (1983-85).

- **MARKED REDUCTIONS - BY SOME 50 PERCENT – IN BULLY/VICTIM PROBLEMS FOR THE PERIOD STUDIED, MEASURED AFTER 8 AND 20 MONTHS OF INTERVENTION**
- **CLEAR REDUCTIONS IN ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR SUCH AS VANDALISM, THEFT, DRUNKENNESS, AND TRUANCY**
- **MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE SOCIAL CLIMATE OF THE CLASSROOMS**

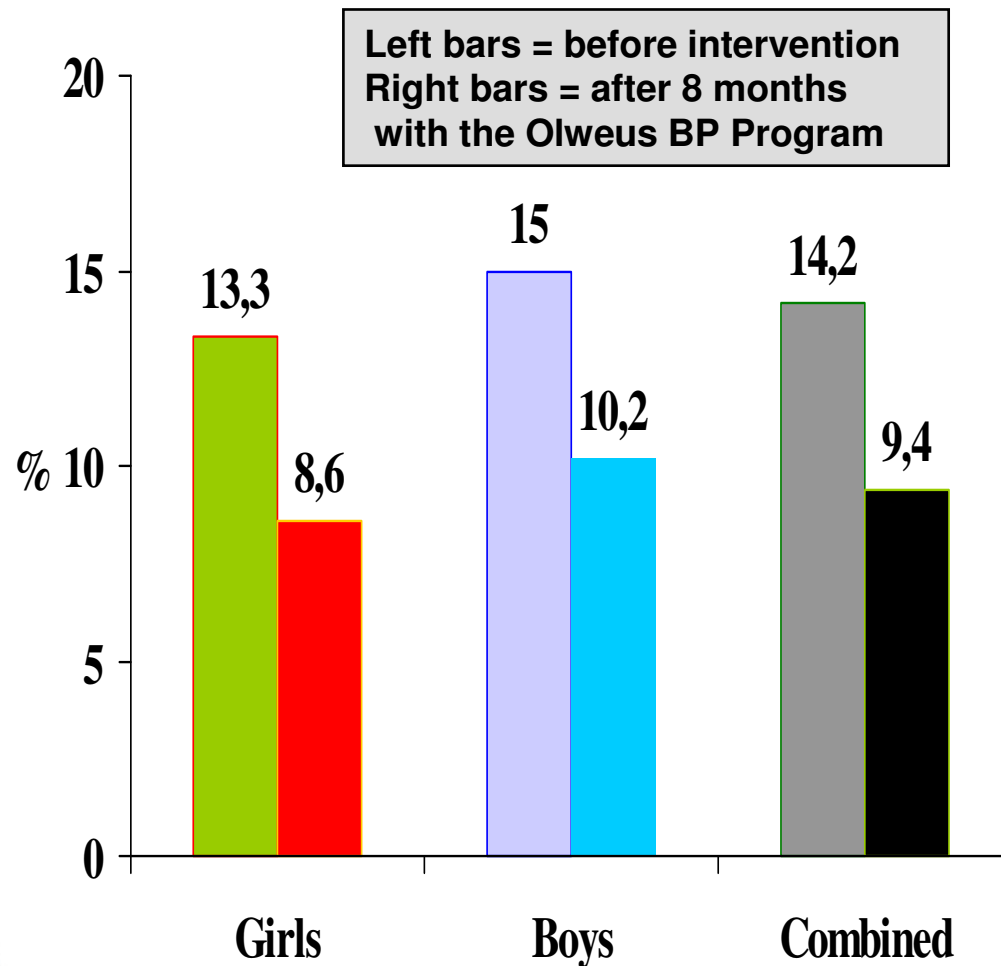
THE BLUEPRINT EVALUATIONS

In the late 1990's, a US expert committee evaluated the effectiveness of more than 500 presumably violence or problem-behaviour preventing programs according to certain minimum-level **criteria**:

- **the program had produced positive effects on relevant target groups (students in this case) in a relatively rigorous scientific evaluation**
- **the effects had lasted for at least one year**
- **the program had produced positive results in at least one site beyond the original one**

PERCENTAGE BULLIED STUDENTS IN GRADES 4-7

Data from 3 cohorts of schools which began implementing the Olweus BP Program in 2001-2003 (number of students = 21 000).

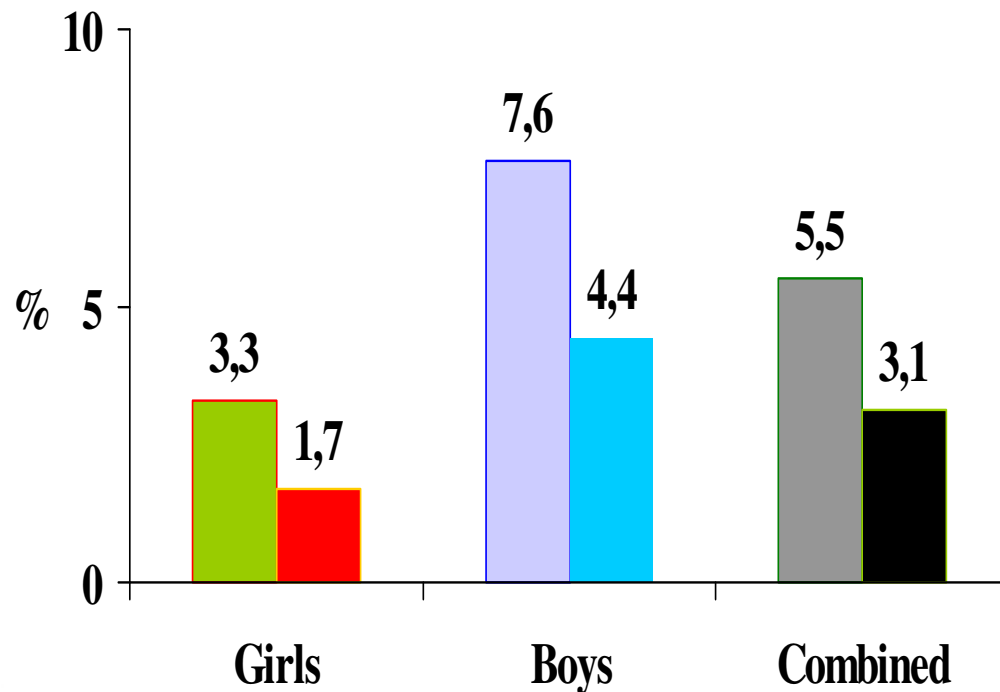


- **Percentage bullied students reduced by 34% in one year**
 - from 14,2% to 9,4%
- girls**
 - reduction by 35%
 - from 13,3% to 8,6%
- boys**
 - reduction by 32%
 - from 15% to 10,2%

PERCENTAGE BULLYING STUDENTS IN GRADES 4-7

Data from 3 cohorts of schools which began implementing the Olweus BP Program in 2001-2003 (number of students = 21 000).

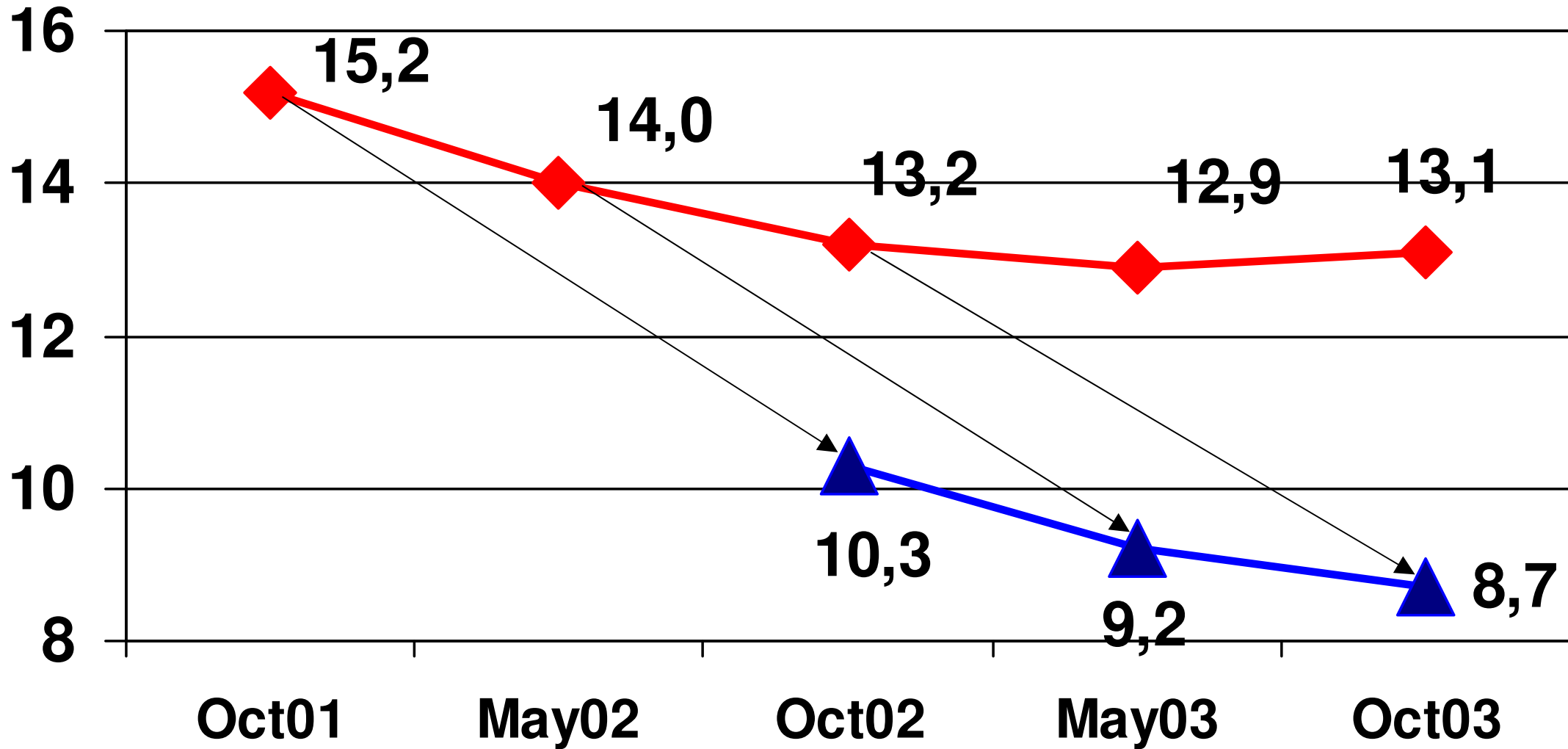
Left bars = before intervention
Right bars = after 8 months
with the Olweus BP Program



- **Percentage bullying students reduced by 44% in one year**
 - from 5,5% to 3,1%
- girls
 - reduction by 48%
 - from 3,3% to 1,7%
- boys
 - reduction by 42%
 - from 7,6% to 4,4%

Percentage bullied students 2001–2003. Elementary grades (4-7).

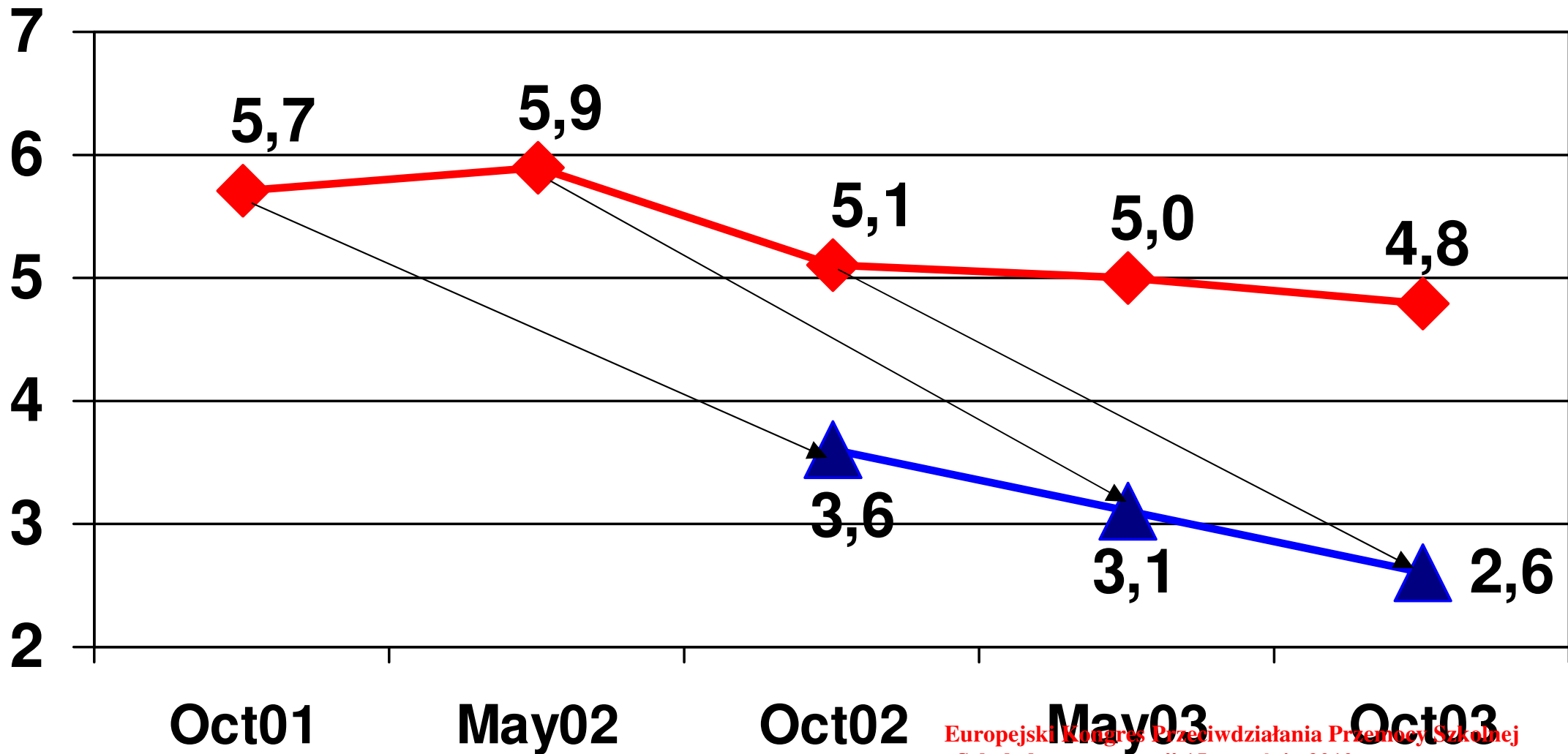
—◆— Base data —▲— After 8 months with the Olweus Program



Percentage bullying students 2001-2003.

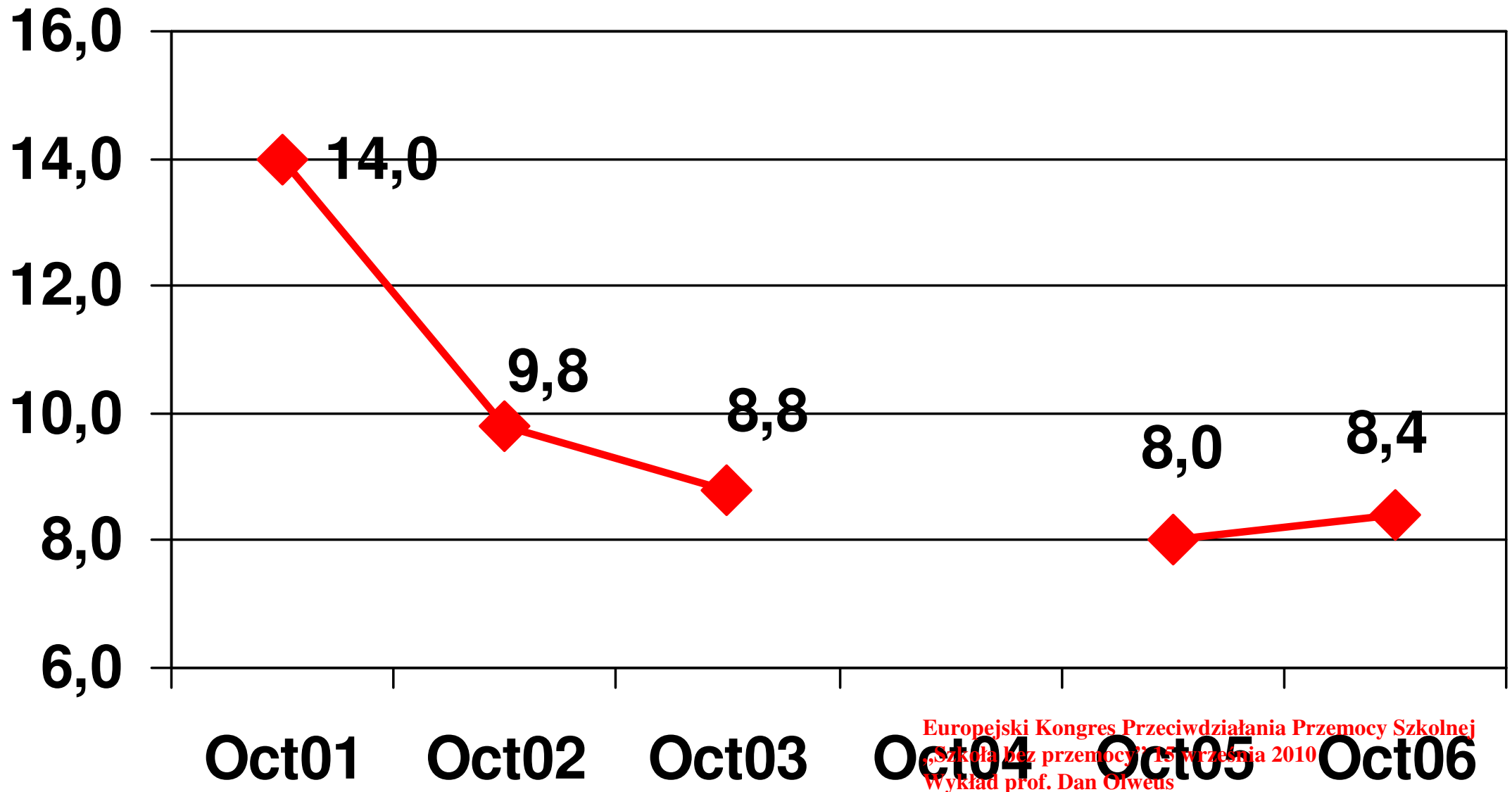
Elementary grades (4-7).

—◆— Baseline data —▲— After 8 months with the Olweus Program



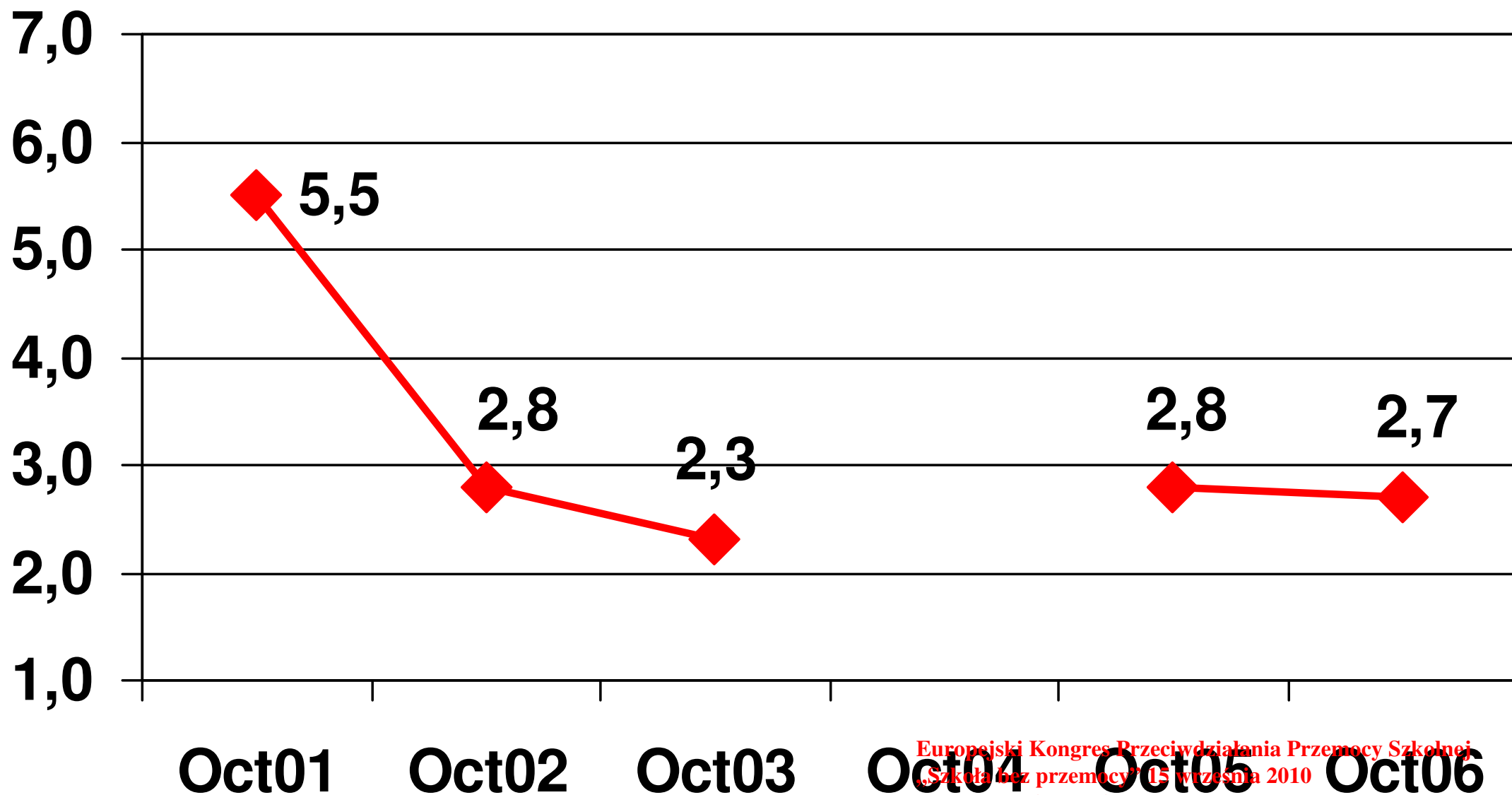
Percentage bullied students 2001–2006

14 Oslo schools, grades 4-7 (n=2500)



Percentage bullying students 2001-2006

14 Oslo schools, grades 4-7 (n=2500)



OVERVIEW OF THE OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM (i)

GENERAL PREREQUISITES

- AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT ON THE PART OF ADULTS

MEASURES AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

- QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY
- SCHOOL CONFERENCE DAY
- EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION DURING RECESS AND LUNCH TIMES
- STAFF DISCUSSION GROUPS
- FORMATION OF COORDINATING GROUP

OVERVIEW OF THE OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM (ii)

MEASURES AT THE CLASSROOM LEVEL

- CLASSROOM RULES AGAINST BULLYING
- CLASSROOM MEETINGS WITH STUDENTS
- MEETINGS WITH PARENTS OF THE CLASS

MEASURES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

- SERIOUS TALKS WITH BULLIES AND VICTIMS
- SERIOUS TALKS WITH PARENTS OF INVOLVED STUDENTS
- DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUAL INTERVENTION PLANS

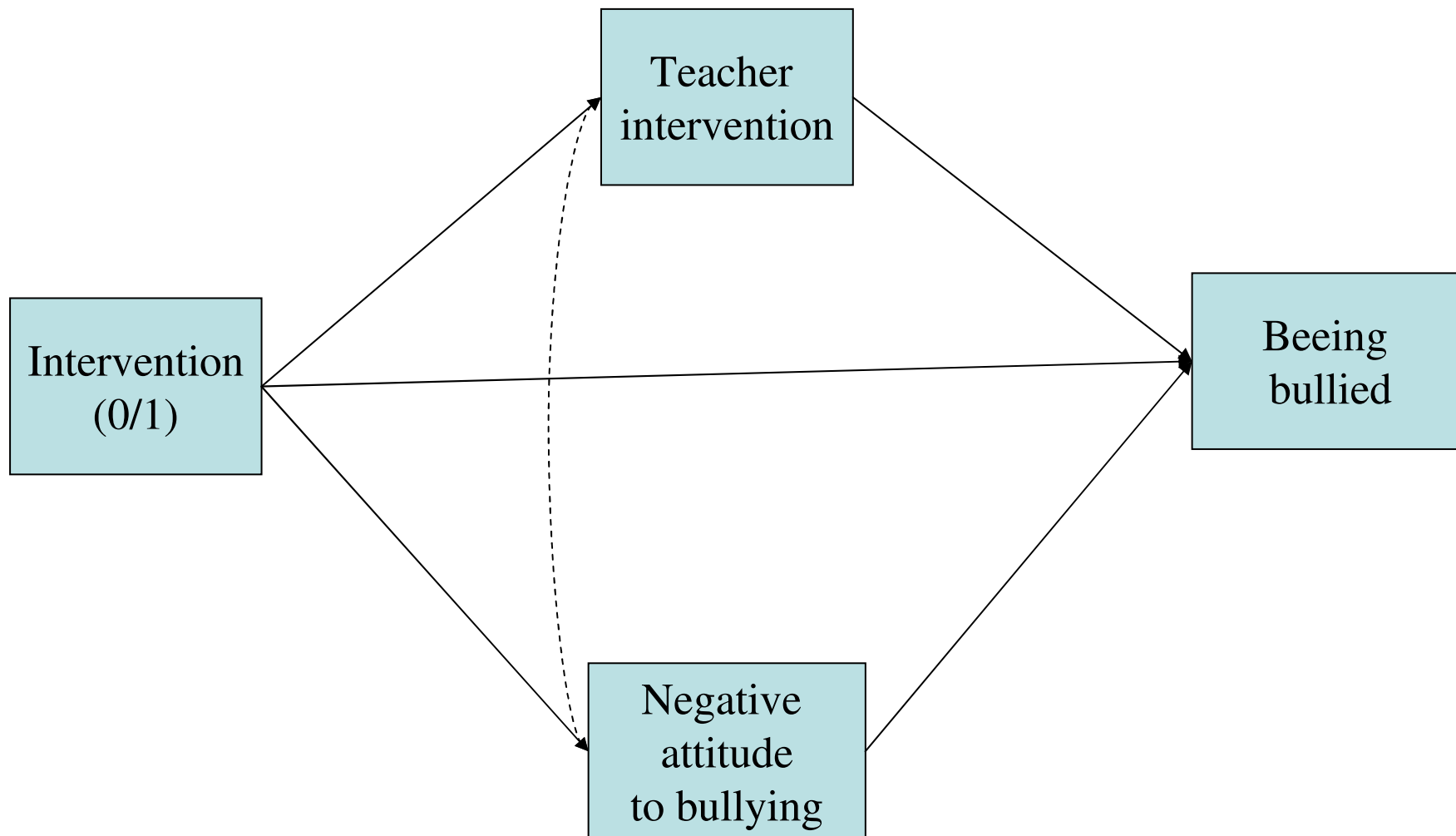
OBPP: “RESTRUCTURING OF THE EXISTING SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT“- CHANGING/REDUCING THE OPPORTUNITY AND REWARD STRUCTURES FOR BULLYING BEHAVIOR

Based on a limited set of principles. Important to create a social environment characterised by:

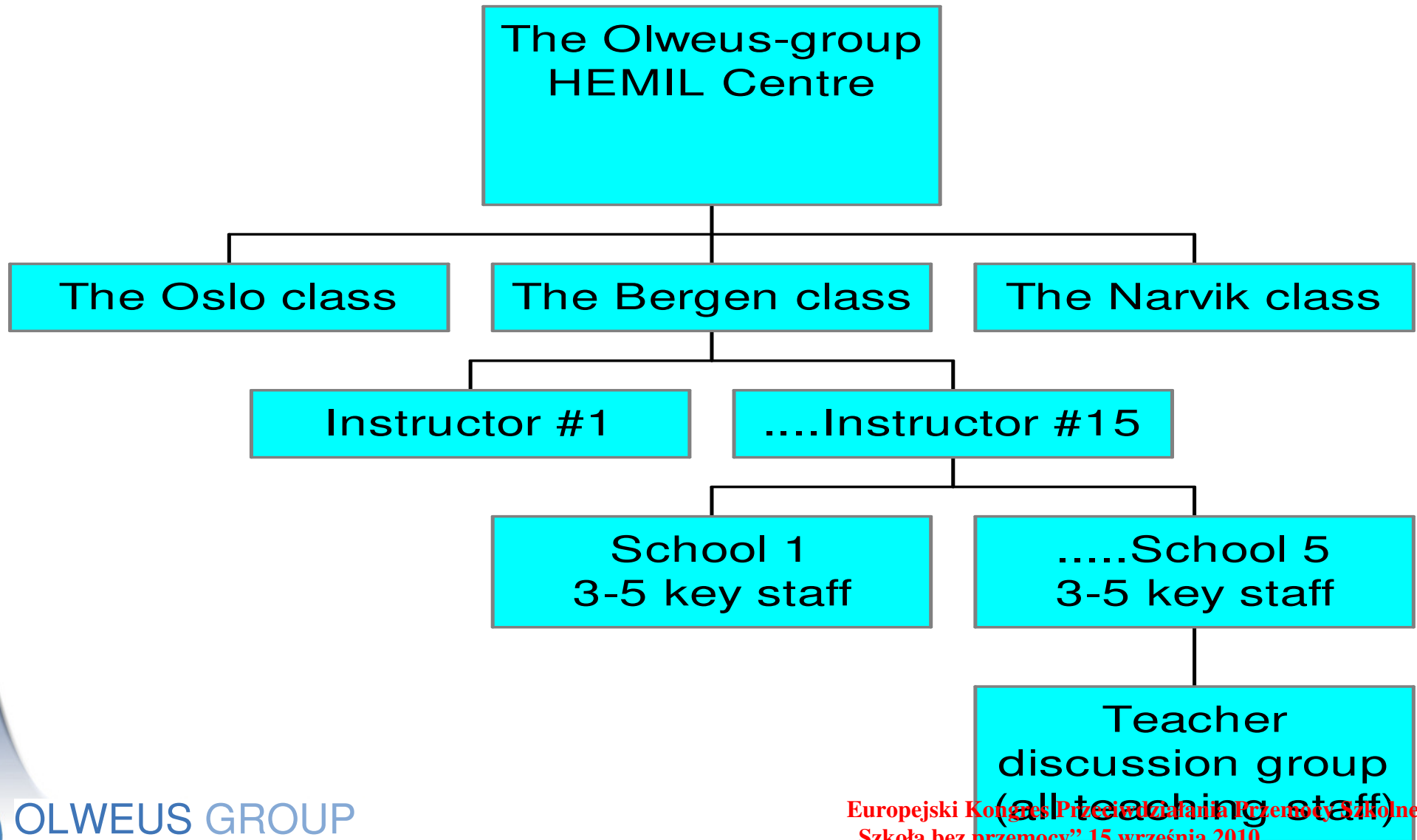
- **warmth and positive involvement from adults**
- **firm limits on unacceptable behavior**
- **consistent application of non-punitive, non-physical sanctions on rule violations**
- **adults act as authorities and positive role models**

Measures based on these principles applied at school, class, and individual levels, and ideally, at home.

Mediational model



TRAINING OF INSTRUCTORS



"EXPLOSION" IN RESEARCH ON BULLY/VICTIM PROBLEMS

Source: Stassen Berger (2006). *Developmental Review*, 27, 90-126.

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

Peer-reviewed articles, editorials, and book reviews (PsycINFO)

Citation: "Within the past 15 years, scholars have shifted from indifference to fascination regarding bullies" (p. 91)

NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS PER YEAR (PsycINFO) ON BULLY/VICTIM PROBLEMS, 1978-2005

	Number of publications	Number per year
• 1978-1989	62	5.2
• 1990-1999	289	28.9
• 2000-2005	728	121.3

A 23-fold increase from the 1980's to 2005

RECENT META-ANALYSIS OF ALL ANTI-BULLYING PROGRAMS IN THE WORLD

Ttofi, M.M., Farrington, D.P., & Baldry, A.C. (2008). Effectiveness of programmes to reduce school bullying: A systematic review. Report to the Swedish National Council on Crime prevention. Available from www.bra.se/publications.

Ttofi, M.M., & Farrington, D.P. What works in preventing bullying: effective elements of anti-bullying programmes. Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research, 1, 13-24.

- 59 reports/studies
- 30 programs (actually 24)
- one control and one intervention condition
- minimum 200 subjects

Main results:

- positive overall effect but relatively small (OR 1.30-1.40) and very considerable heterogeneity (not a meaningful population of programs)
- 6-7 programs “clearly effective” according to T.& F.

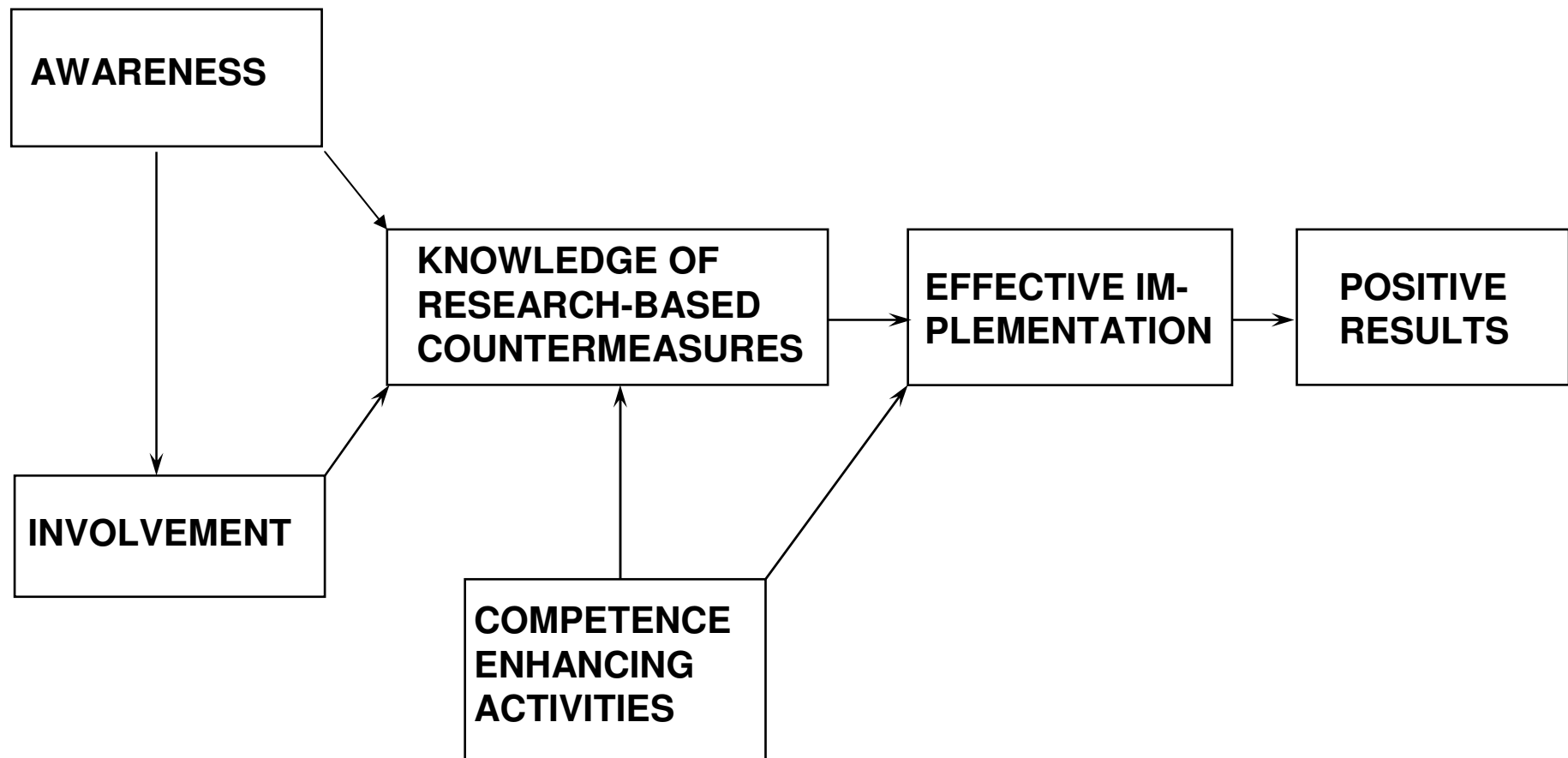
Comment: Too general conclusion, “apples-and-oranges”. All evaluations of all programs except one were based on “efficacy” or “first-time, demonstration” projects; little evidence from “effectiveness” or large-scale dissemination projects; importance of replications and reproducibility

STANDARDS OF EVIDENCE: CRITERIA FOR EFFICACY, EFFECTIVENESS AND DISSEMINATION

- ▶ **Efficacy: Optimal conditions**
- ▶ **Effectiveness: Ordinary conditions**
- ▶ **Dissemination: Ready for large-scale dissemination**

Source: Flay et al. (2005). Prevention Science, 6, 151-175.

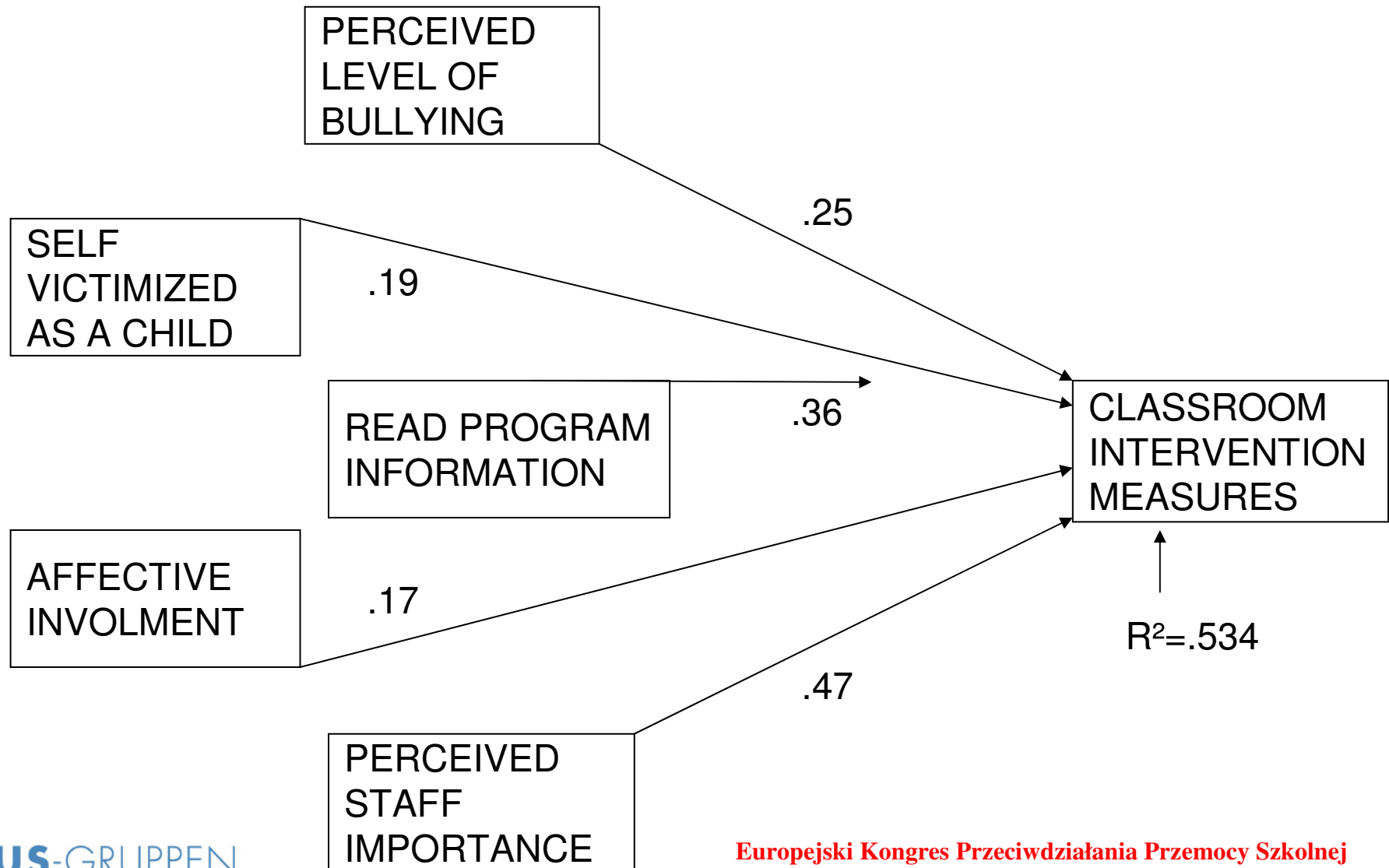
FACTORS OF KEY IMPORTANCE



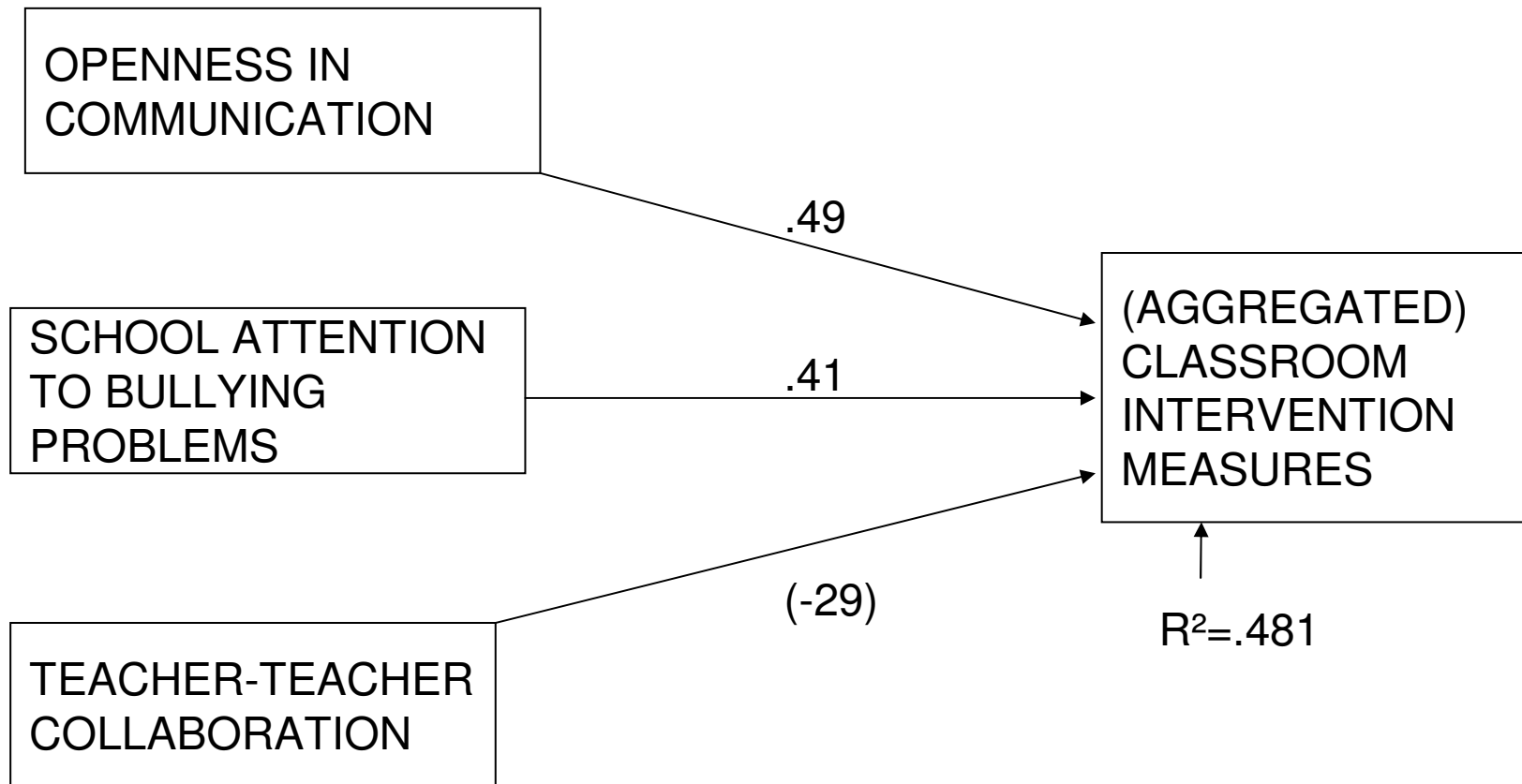
SCHOOL/CLASS RULES AGAINST BULLYING

- **1. WE DON'T BULLY OTHERS IN OUR SCHOOL.**
- **2. WE WILL TRY TO HELP STUDENTS WHO ARE BEING BULLIED.**
- **3. WE WILL TRY TO INCLUDE STUDENTS WHO ARE EASILY LEFT OUT.**
- **4. IF WE KNOW THAT SOMEBODY IS BEING BULLIED, WE WILL TELL AN ADULT AT SCHOOL AND AN ADULT AT HOME. (THIS RULE ALSO IMPLIES: IF I AM BULLIED, I WILL TELL AN ADULT AT SCHOOL AND AN ADULT AT HOME.)**

TEACHER LEVEL FACTORS



SCHOOL LEVEL FACTORS



Aggressive behavior

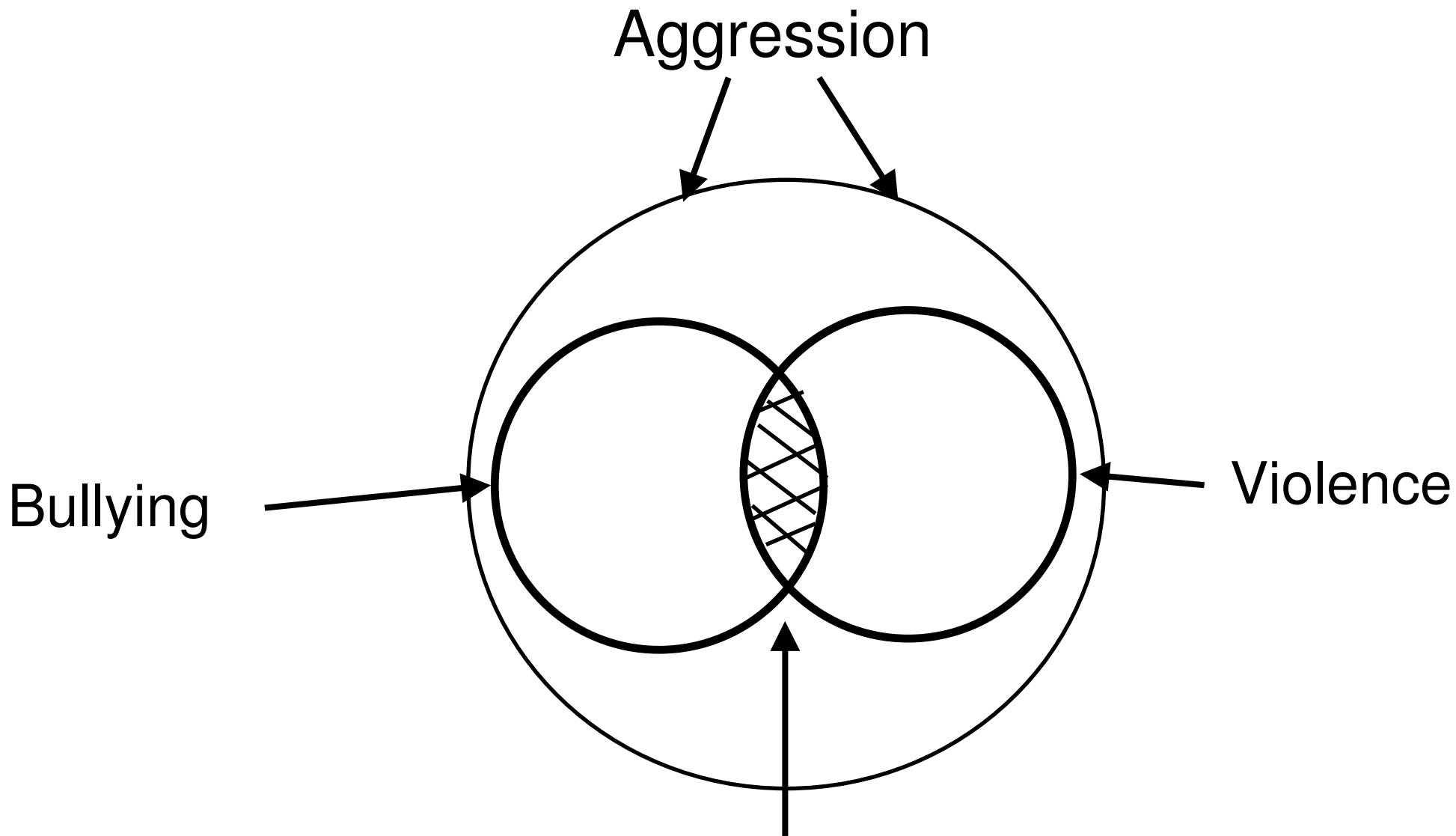
when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another

Violence or violent behavior

aggressive behavior where the perpetrator uses his/her own body or an object/weapon to inflict injury or discomfort (usually of some seriousness) upon another

Main categories of violent crimes

- homicide
- aggravated assault
- assault
- robbery
- rape

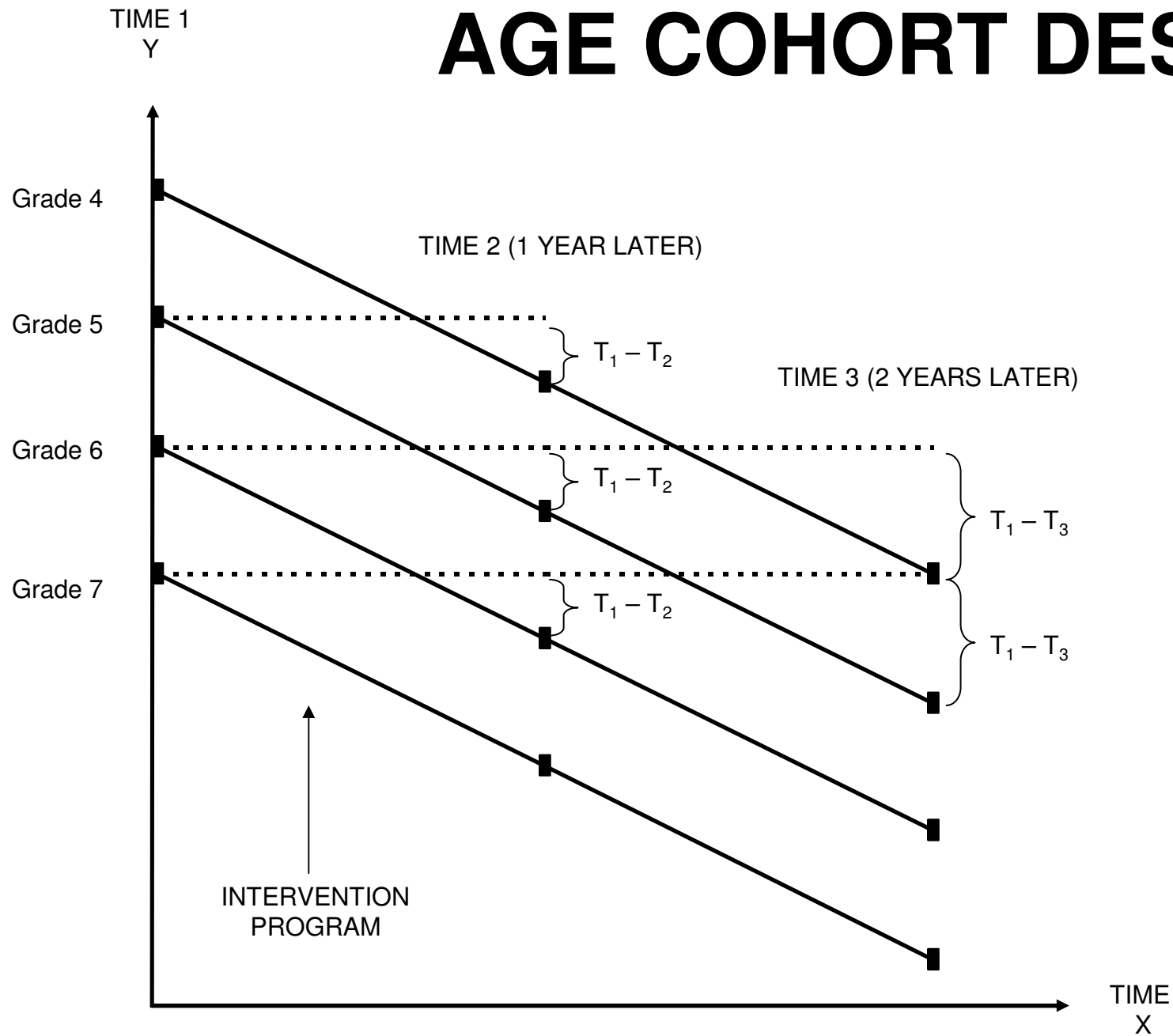


Bullying with physical (violent) means

BULLYING IS IN MANY WAYS A BETTER CONCEPT THAN VIOLENCE

- clearer definition
- concerns both perpetrators and victims
- through the repetitiveness criterion, the problematic nature of the perpetrators' behaviour becomes more evident
- lots of research on the short-term and long-term effects/consequences for both perpetrators and victims
- to have been bullied is actually one of the few common characteristics of school shooting perpetrators (some 70 %)
- provides a good rationale for intervention; can be linked to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

AGE COHORT DESIGN



TWO PRINCIPLES FOR LARGE-SCALE DISSEMINATION:

- To try to ensure that the program was implemented according to intentions, that is, with reasonable fidelity
- To try to get the program implemented in a reasonable number of schools in a relatively limited period of time, say 5-6 years

MAJOR GOALS OF STAFF DISCUSSION GROUPS

- to provide more detailed and comprehensive knowledge of the intervention program and its various components
- to provide participants with the possibility of testing ideas and practical solutions to various problem situations in a secure environment
- to stimulate fast implementation of the various components the program
- to share experiences and viewpoints with others in similar situations and to learn from others' positive and negative experiences
- to create and maintain motivation and commitment
- to stimulate cooperation and coordination of program components and activities

Figure 1.

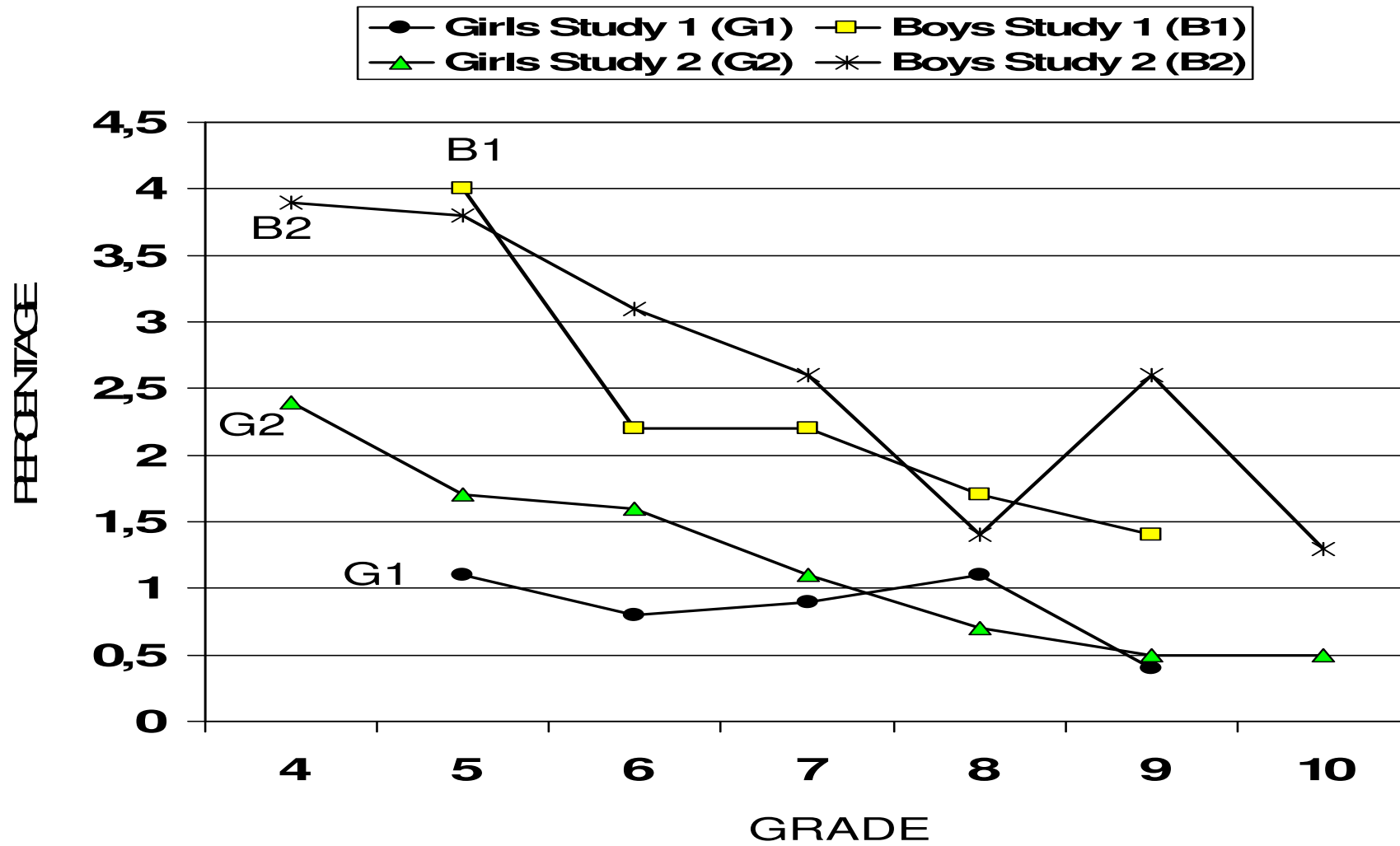
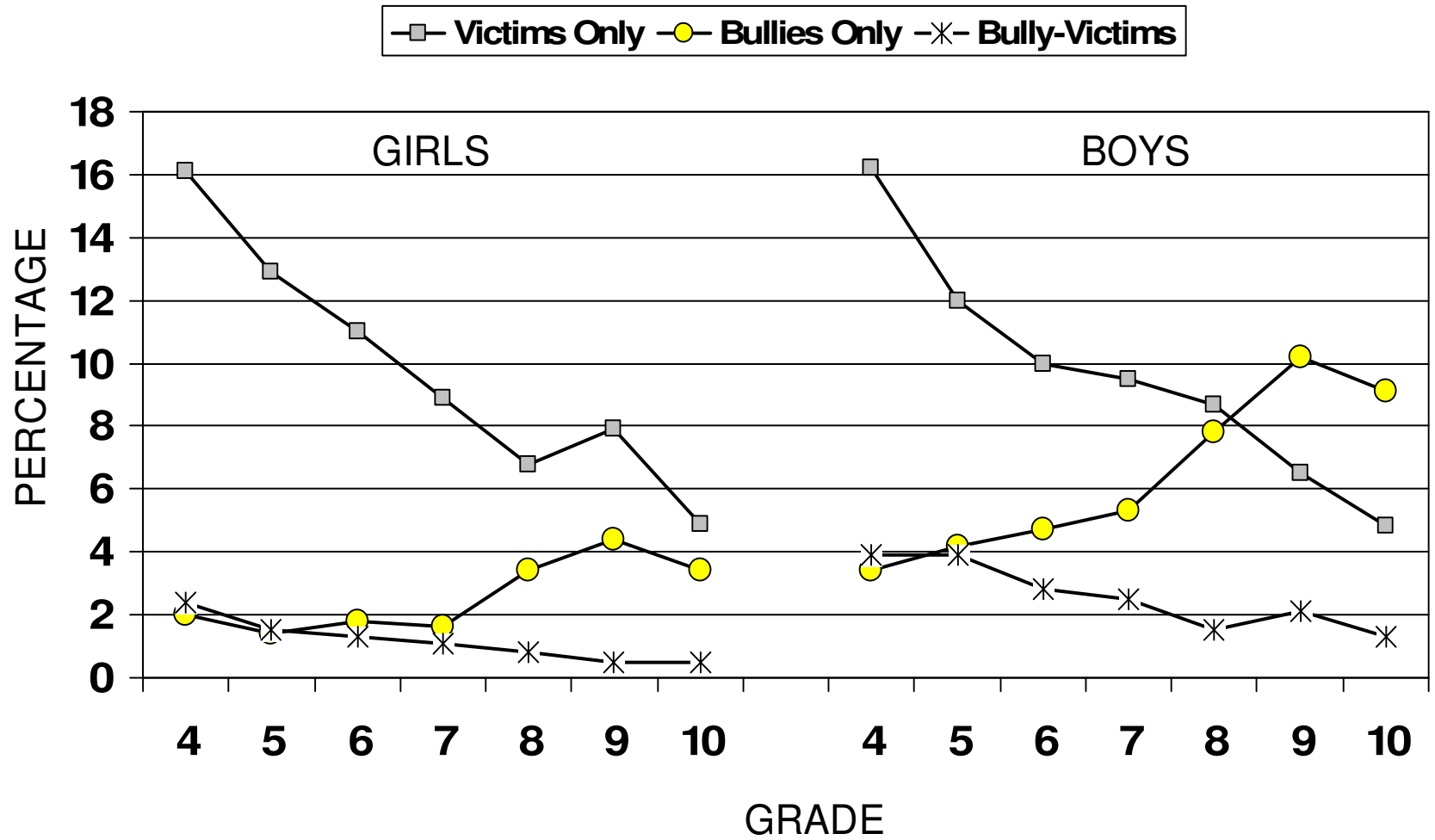
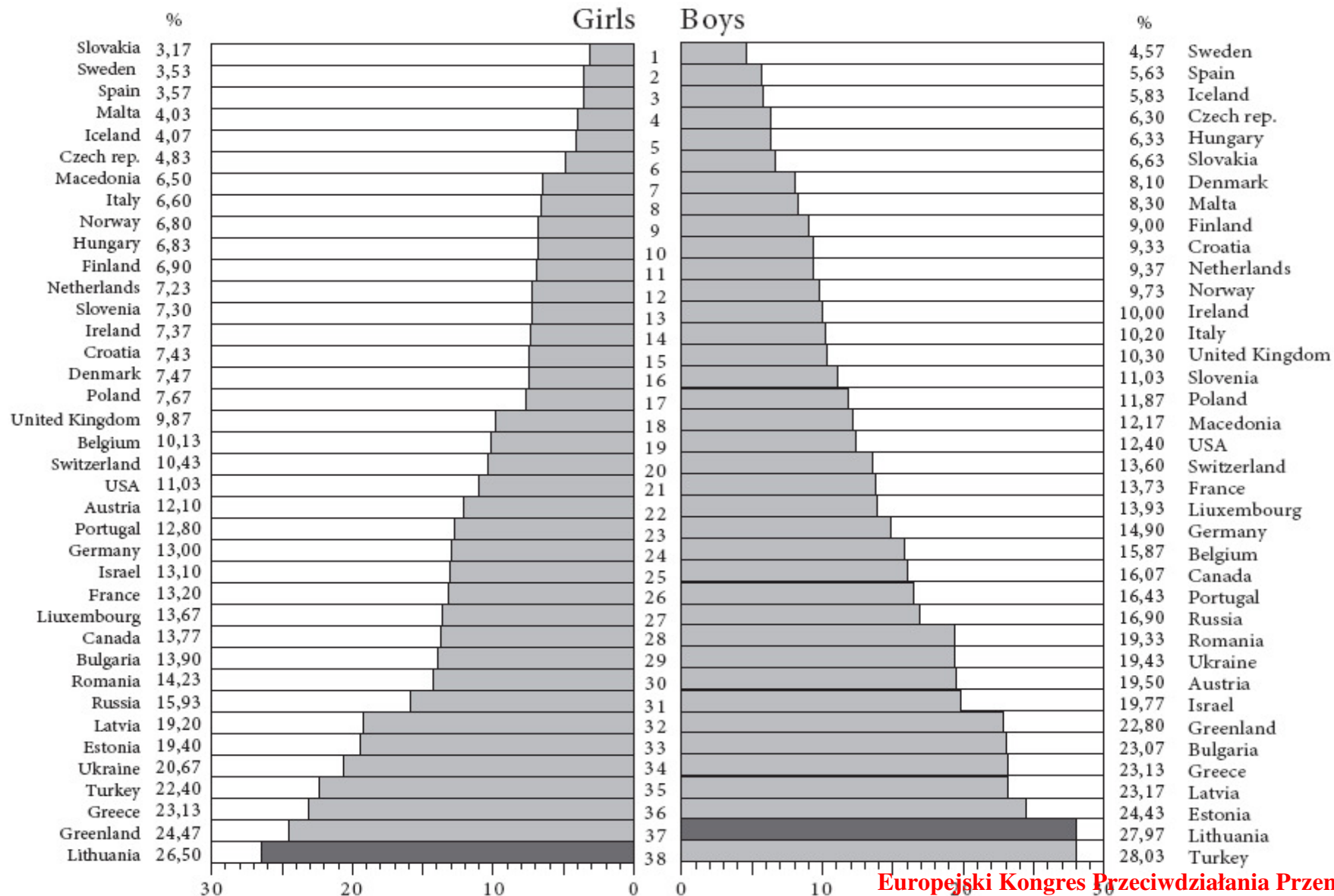


Figure 2.



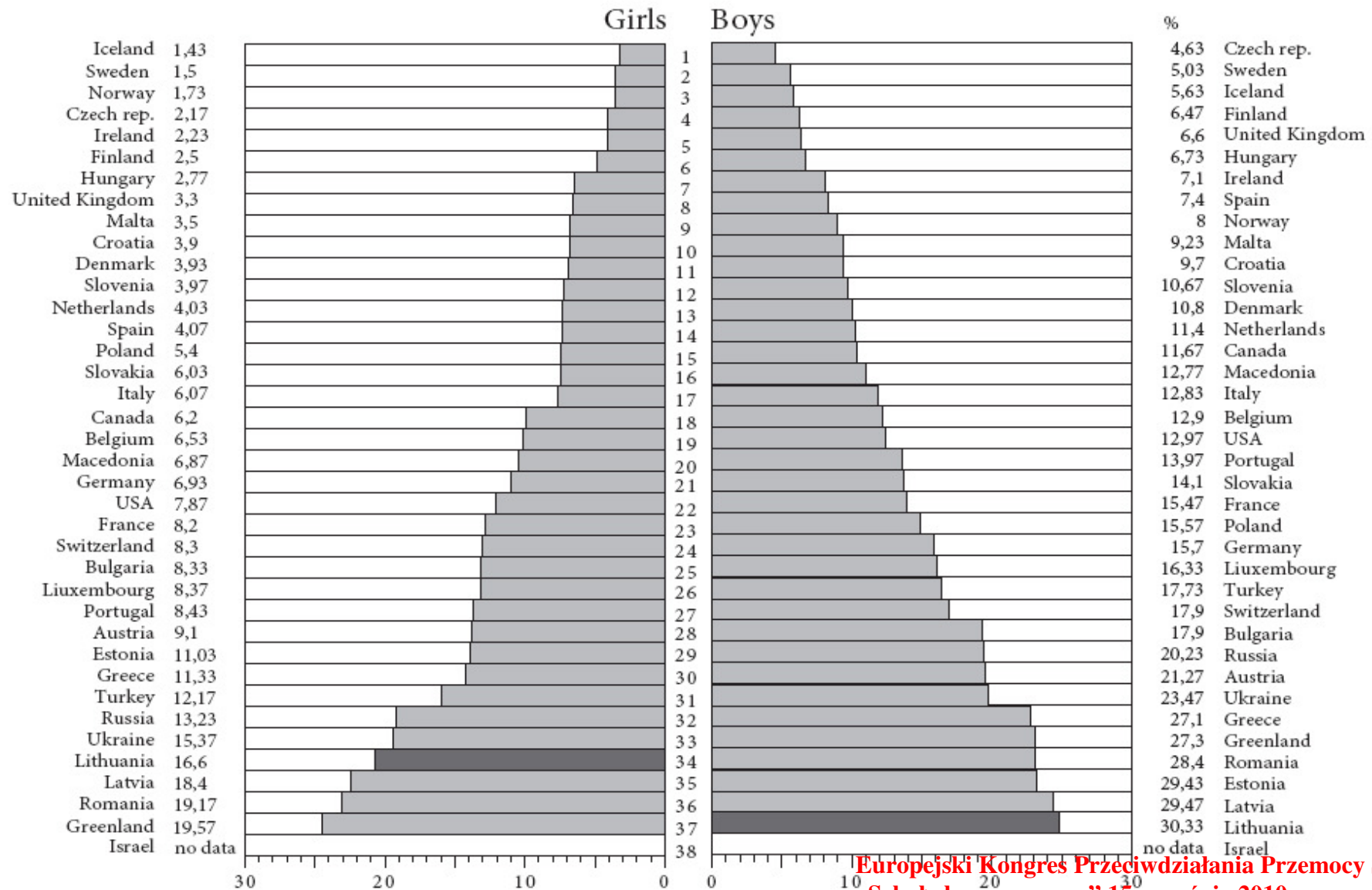
The prevalence of being bullied

(HBSC 2005/2006; Zaborskis&Vareikiene, 2008)



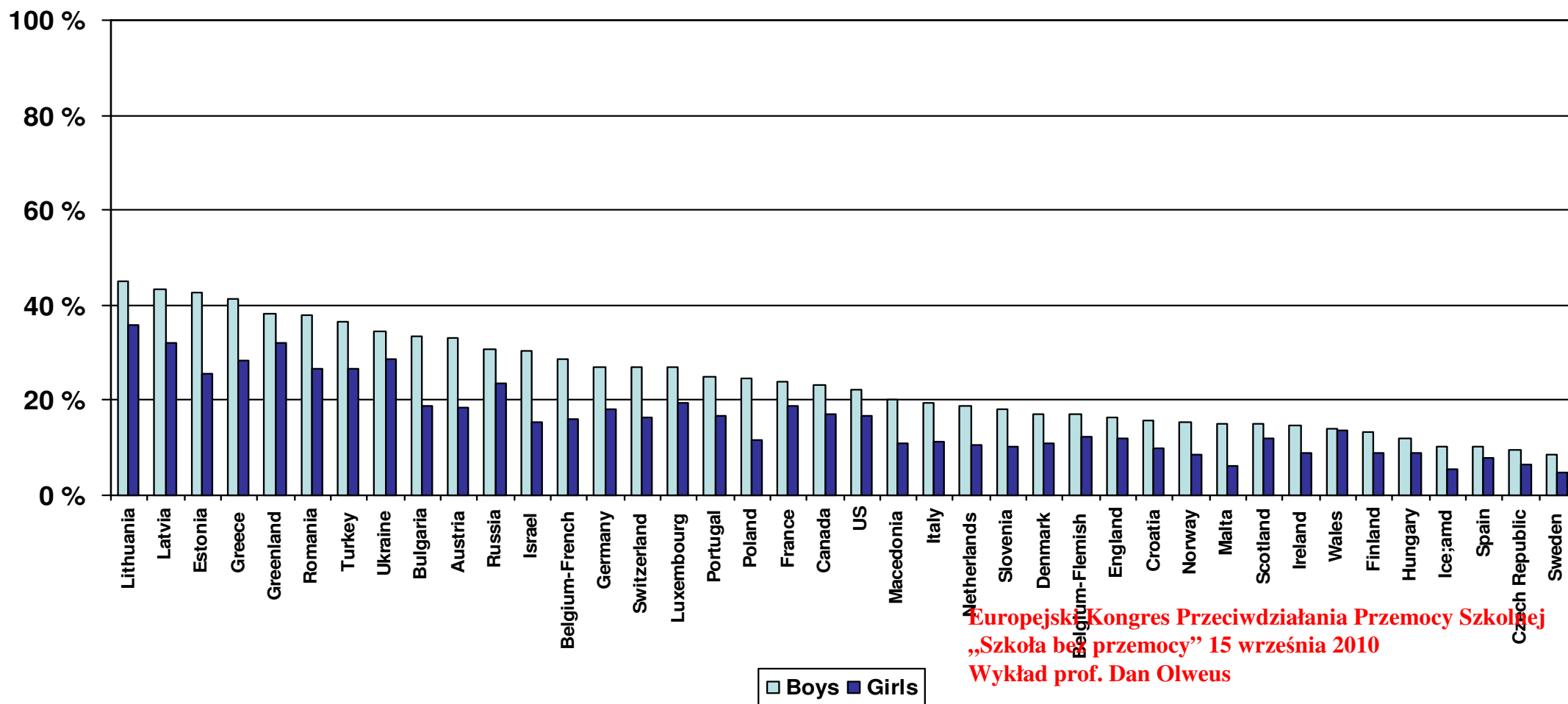
The prevalence of bullying others

(HBSC 2005/2006; Zaborskis&Vareikiene, 2008)



Percentage of Students Being Involved in Bullying as Victims only, Bullies only or Bully-Victims

41 Nation Study of 11, 13 & 15-Year-Old School Children (Craig et al., 2009)



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SERIOUS EPISODES LIKE SCHOOL SHOOTINGS

- very rare events
- perpetrators have few common characteristics, problems identifying adequate risk factors
- “profiling” of students who are likely to become school shooters have not been successful
- many false positives (=suspected perpetrators who will not be perpetrators) and also problems with false negatives

ONE DOUBTFUL APPROACH

Zero Tolerance Policies (in USA in particular) typically mean use of different policies such as **suspension or expulsion** with severe sanctions for relatively minor offenses, thereby hoping to prevent more serious ones. Based on the idea of deterrence.

No or contrary research evidence for such policies: See American Psychologist, 2008, 63,852-862. Are zero tolerance policies effective in schools? APA Zero Tolerance Task Force.

A POTENTIALLY MORE PROMISING APPROACH FOR SERIOUS SITUATIONS

Threat Assessment

Some guidelines in Educational Researcher, 39, 5-77.
Available at <http://er.aera.net>.

