

# Experiences of Bullying and Peer Victimization in Schools: Parental perspectives

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**NERA2016**, 9-11 March, Helsinki Finland, NERA 44th Congress  
Social Justice, Equality and Solidarity in Education  
[Network 7: Value Issues and Social Relations in Education](#)





“But only a ginger,  
can call another  
ginger ginger...”

“It doesn’t matter, you  
are still a Redhead”

“It will disappear...”



# Overall PhD project 2014-2019

- **Purpose:** To understand, explain and ultimately prevent children's exposure to interpersonal peer violence such as degrading treatment, bullying and harassment.
- **Theoretical framework:** Social-ecological model, child and youth studies and psychology
- **Methods:** Mixed methods both qualitative and quantitative methods will be used.
- **Material:** Cases of complaints concerning degrading treatment to The Child and School Student Representative (BEO).

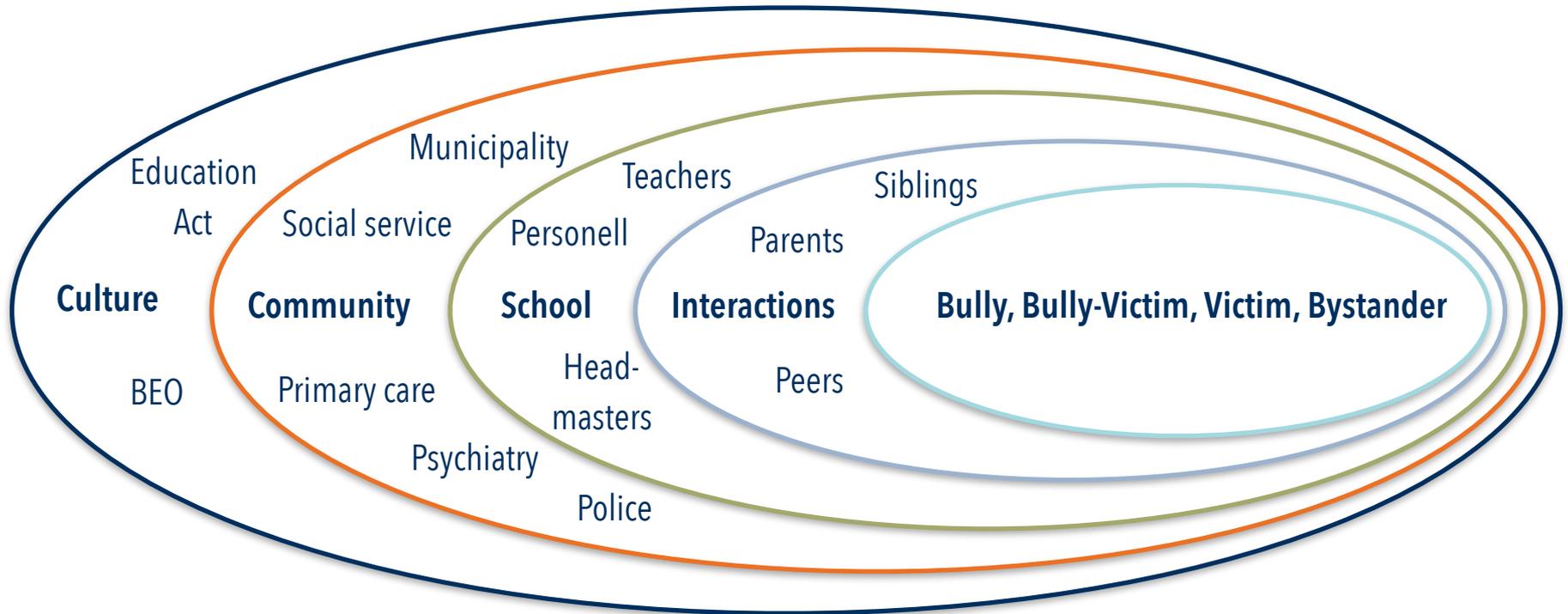


# Perspectives and potential studies concerning children's exposure to peer violence

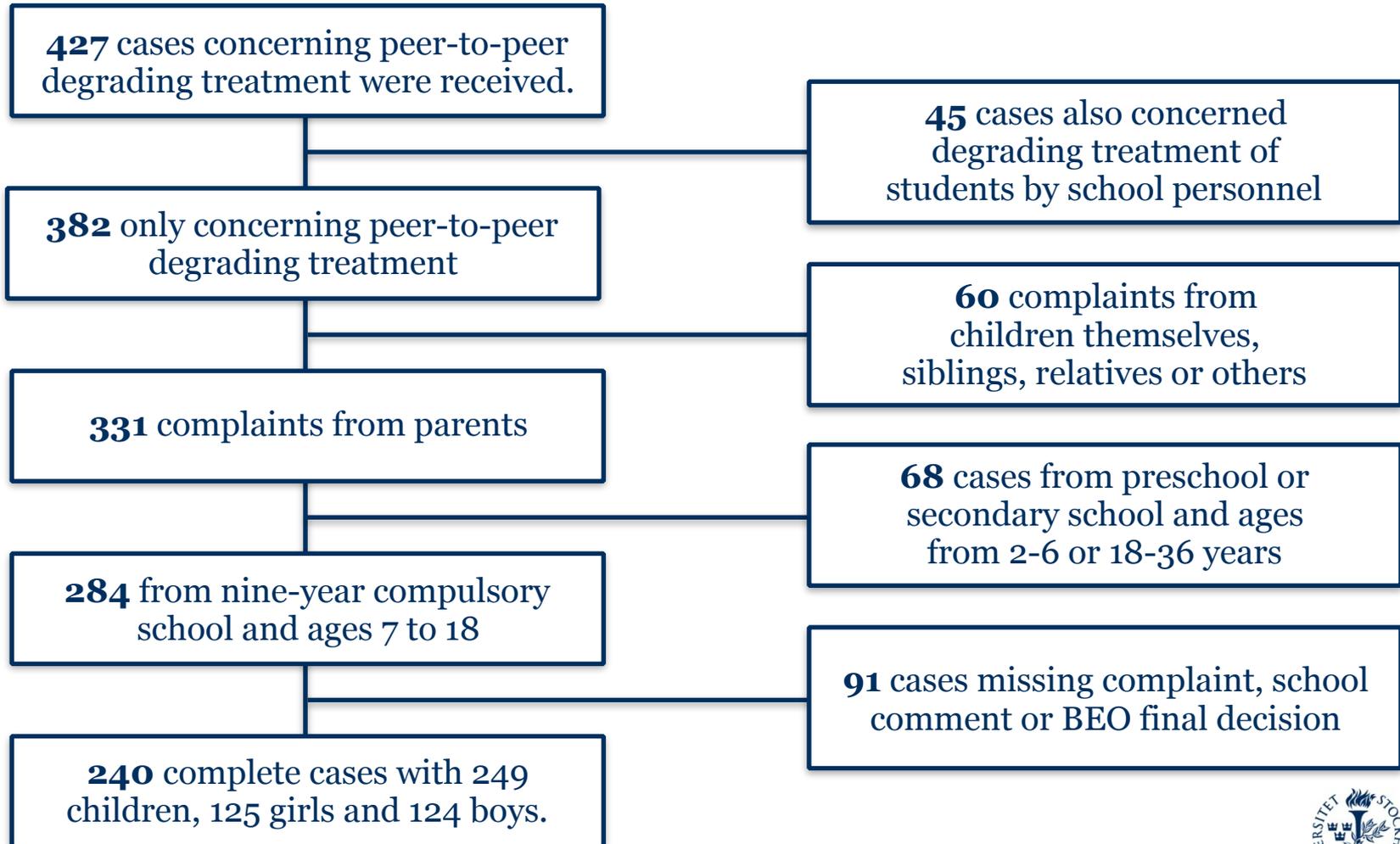
- i. Parental perspectives on the victimization of their child
- ii. Schools responses and responsibility
- iii. Legislative policy interventions by the BEO



# Presentation of the BEO material within the social-ecological framework



# Inclusion and exclusion of cases



# Study i. Experiences of Bullying and Peer Victimization in Schools: Parental perspectives

- Previous research on parents' perspectives on bullying is limited and a recent systematic review calls for further research focusing on parents (Harcourt, Jasperse & Green, 2014).
- Explorative question: How do parents understand the peer-victimization of their child?
- Method: An inductive approach within an interpretative phenomenological framework

# Preliminary results: work in progress

- Variation and similarities in how parents understand peer victimization
- Health consequences as a way for parents to understand that something is wrong
- School avoidance as desperate protection of the child from a parental perspective



# Variation and similarities in how parents understand peer victimization

- As something very serious that hurt their child, and
  - escalated over time or
  - went up and down, back and forth for years or
  - happened just once but with great force
- As something that took many forms and shapes, physical, emotional/psychological and sometimes sexual
- As something the school couldn't handle
- As something that was also hurting them, since they care for their child, where the combination of the peer victimization and schools inability to stop the degrading treatment, is something they desperately tried to effect, but couldn't control.



# Health consequences as a way for parents to understand that something is wrong

- Sometimes parents understood the victimization of their child through health consequences like anxiety, depression, sleeping problems, or upset or sad questions that occurred from their children around bed-time.
- Physical wounds was often photographed by parents and attached to the complaint. Pictures of children's faces, legs, arms with bruises or wound, blood in the bed etc, was often also reported to police.
- Medical reports from visits to primary care or acute medical treatment was sometimes attached, as well as treatment journals from counselling or child psychiatry.
- Many children reported that they didn't want to live anymore and some had plans for attempting suicide, which become a concern for social services.

# School avoidance as desperate protection of the child from a parental perspective

- Many peer-victimised children didn't want to go to school, as long as they stayed at home they felt better.
- Some parents struggled with getting their child to school, while others protected their child by letting them stay at home.
- Some parents got accused of being an obstruction to compulsory school attendance.
- Many parents who had the possibility, changed schools as a final way of child protection.



# Discussion of dilemmas

- Parental position caught in between child and school description of 'reality'
- What to tell or not to tell a parent?
- A matter of trust or change?



# Parental position caught in between child and school description of 'reality'

- Many parents were caught in between a unique disclosure of their child and school's response that the parents was not in school when it happened and have not seen or heard what happen from the perspectives of the other involved children.



# What to tell or not to tell a parent?

- Sometimes children tend to tell their parents about things they don't dare to tell someone in school
- Sometimes they don't tell their parents because they feel ashamed or don't want to worry their parents again.
- What do children tell or not tell their parents?
- What implications has a system of complaints where most complaints are done by parents?



# A matter of trust or change?

- Schools ask for parents to trust them for something to change, parents don't trust schools since nothing have changed.
- Changing school seems to be the last way out in many cases



# Thank you

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