



# Ethnic bullying and diversity: the role of social/legal and perceptive aspects

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## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND:



- Findings on the impact of multi-ethnic classes and schools on social interactions are still controversial, especially in relation to the role of ethnic diversity as risk (Jansen et al., 2016; Tolsma et al., 2013), or protective factor (Bellmore et al., 2012; Closson et al., 2014) on bullying victimization.
- Ethnic bullying** is a subtype of bias-based bullying and it refers to targeting someone because of her/his ethnic background or cultural identity; it may include direct and indirect forms of aggression. (McKenney, Pepler, Craig & Connolly, 2006).
- European studies defined participants' ethnicity looking at their immigrant status (i.e., generation of immigrants) (Agirdag et al., 2011; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002), while in North America, students' ethnicity was defined by more perceptual aspects (i.e., race) (Connell et al., 2015; Mehari & Farrell, 2015).
- In Italy the social/legal recognition of the citizenship status seems to catch specific processes in ethnic bullying (Palladino et al., 2021).



## AIM OF THE STUDY:



to analyze **the impact of both social/legal** (i.e., the citizenship status) and **perceptual aspects** (i.e., how different they are perceived from the majority) of ethnic diversity on ethnic bullying victimization.

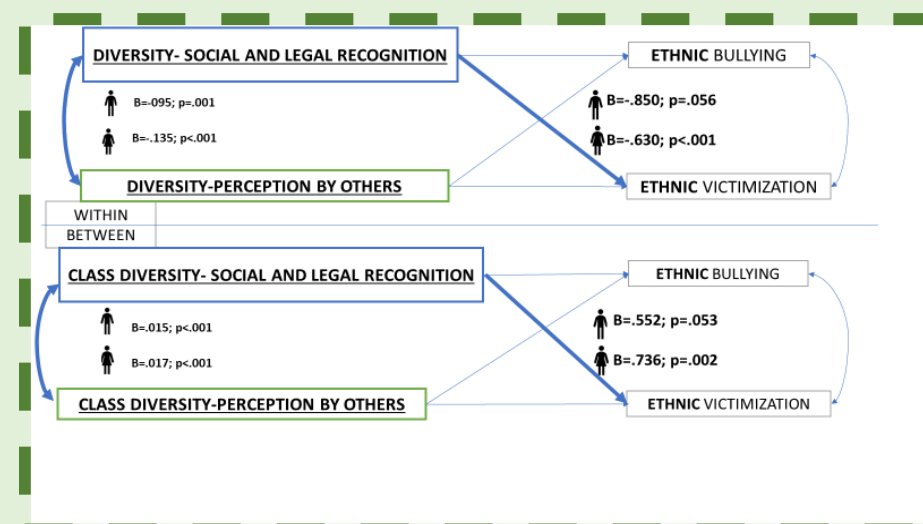
Specifically, these variables will be considered both at the individual and class level trying to catch the impact of different processes. **Gender differences will be analyzed.**

## METHODS:



Data were collected in 58 classes of 13 high schools (N=960; 52% girls; age M=15.19; SD=.60).

- ✓ **Individual level:**  
Legal/social recognition (i.e., students with citizenship status);  
Perceptual aspects of diversity (i.e., attribution of different ethnic membership by strangers);
- ✓ **Class level:**  
Class diversity by legal/social recognition (Simpson Diversity Index; Simpson, 1949);  
Class perceptual diversity (percentage of students that reported to be different from the majority group).
- ✓ **OUTCOME VARIABLES:**  
**Ethnic bullying** (M=4.15; SD=.84);  
**Ethnic victimization** (M=4.26; SD=1.06);  
(Florence Bullying-Victimization Scales;  
Palladino, Nocentini & Menesini, 2012).



## RESULTS:

Multilevel analyses showed the impact of the citizenship status (i.e., legal/social recognition) on ethnic victimization at both individual (males; B=-.850; p=.056; females; B=-.630; p<.001) and class level (males; B=.552; p=.053; females; B=.736; p=.002).

## CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS:



- This research highlights that **different categorization of ethnicity** seems to underline different processes in the relationship between ethnic diversity and bullying;
  - At the **individual level**, the non-possession of Italian citizenship seems to constitute a risk factor for being victimized. At the **class level**, being in a class with many people without the Italian citizenship status could be a risk factor for a higher presence of ethnic victimization;
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- Intervention should be set up to promote inclusion and to contrast conflict and bullying between majority and minority group;
  - Future research involving participants' ethnicity should analyze different aspects of the construct.

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