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## Peer Bullying of Academically Oriented Students: Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and School Context

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PEER BULLYING OF ACADEMICALLY ORIENTED STUDENTS: GENDER, RACE,  
ETHNICITY, AND SCHOOL CONTEXT

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
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in

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by  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation reports on several quantitative analyses of bullying victimization among U.S. high school students. The methods employed are secondary analysis of survey data originally collected by the National Center of Education Statistics through the Educational Longitudinal Study. The data analyzed are a nationally representative sample of U.S. high school sophomores from the year 2002. This report contains six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces public and scholarly interests on bullying victimization with a specific focus on approaching bullying from a sociological viewpoint. Chapter 2 reviews scholarly research that motivates each analysis in the report. Chapter 3 presents an analysis which is focused on gender differences in bullying victimization. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of bullying victimization disaggregated by racial / ethnic groups. Chapter 5 presents an analysis of bullying victimization among Latino students with specific attention being paid to immigration status and school location. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 all contain sections related to previous literature, methods, findings, and discussion of findings. Chapter 6 summarizes the main findings from each of those chapters and reflects on the similarities and differences between the main findings. Chapter 6 also discusses the shortcomings, contributions, and implications of the research.

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

At the interpersonal level, it is generally accepted that bullying encompasses aggression which is repeatedly directed at a weaker individual by a more powerful individual (Olweus 1993). Although the fields of education, psychology, and educational psychology have been at the forefront of scholarship on bullying (Batshce and Knoff 1994; Espelage and Swearer 2003; Card et al. 2008; Swearer et al. 2010), sociology as a discipline is beginning to examine bullying as a sociological phenomenon. To examine the definition of bullying with a sociological eye for example, one can expand on the significance of power in a bullying event. There is a hierarchical structure that is being established, reinforced, or perhaps challenged. Further, it is inherently a social interaction since at least two people are involved. Finally, sociologists recognize that social interaction takes places within larger social contexts; thus the sociology of education has much to contribute to scholarship on bullying when considering many bullying events take place within schools.

This dissertation which is situated in the sociology of education has taken gender, racial, and ethnic inequality into account in order to examine variation in bullying victimization. In addition, students' academic attitudes, effort, and achievement were employed as potential predictors of variation in bullying victimization. Methodologically, while also examining many individual level predictors of bullying victimization, the analyses presented used various techniques including hierarchical linear modeling and fixed effects regression to account for characteristics of students' schools as contextual effects on bullying victimization. This was executed through the analysis of data collected for the 2002 Education Longitudinal Study (ELS) which included a racially diverse and nationally representative sample of U.S. high school

sophomores. The 2002 (base year) data are examined in each analysis presented in the dissertation. Students were sophomores in high school during the data collection.

Although the focus of the dissertation is built on a framework from sociology of education and inequality, the interest in studying bullying is still motivated by the many insights provided by studies from other disciplines. In those fields there has been a clear and consistent focus on bullying and its effect on students' mental health and academic experiences. For example, a review of studies indicates that the act of bullying as well as bullying victimization is related to depression, increased anxiety, and lower self-esteem (Jordan and Austin 2012). Academic-related consequences of bullying include problems such as poor academic achievement (Arsenault et al. 2006; Beran, Hughes, and Lupart 2008; Nakamoto and Schwartz 2010; Juvonen 2011), decreased classroom participation (Ladd, Harold-Brown, and Reiser 2008), negative evaluations from teachers (Juvonen, Wang, and Espinoza 2011), detachment from school (Wei and Williams 2004), and academic withdrawal (Smith et al. 2004). Bullying victimization is associated with increased fear of being victimized in the future which hampers concentration in school (Addington and Yablon 2011). Based on these consequences it is clear that bullying in U.S. schools is a significant social problem worthy of future study.

## **SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH THAT PROVIDES INSIGHT INTO BULLYING**

In contrast to studies from educational psychology, many ethnographic studies situated in the sociology of education have hinted at the pervasiveness of bullying without directly defining the observed behavior as bullying. For example, Morris (2008; 2012) found that in both rural and urban high schools, male students were singled out and called homophobic names if they were defined as too studious or academically focused. Similar observations were made among

elementary students in Great Britain (Epstein 1998; Renold 2001; 2004). In racially segregated urban schools, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) described how high achieving African American students were singled out as “acting white” rather than having an authentically black identity. In each of these instances, there was repeated verbal (and sometimes physical) aggression directed at students who were being othered by their peers. Nonetheless these studies did not have a direct interest in bullying as the current dissertation does.

In a similar vein, although bullying had not been the original focus, observations and ethnographies of students’ peer cultures have a long history of documenting the importance of popularity and social status in U.S. schools. This dates back to Coleman’s (1961) research which among many findings noted that athletes enjoyed much more popularity and status as compared to students whose primary reputation surrounded academic prowess. In a more recent comprehensive study of student culture in U.S. schools, Milner (2004) links the importance of competing for social status to the prevalence of bullying. He argues that the day to day restrictions placed on students within the school system limit the possibilities for the development of one’s identity and self-esteem; bullying takes place in part because students still have control over their position in the school’s social hierarchy. In contrast to the classes, curriculum, rules and regulations that are administered by teachers, principals, and staff, peer social hierarchies and competition for status in the hierarchies are solely based on interactions within the student body. Faris and Felmlee (2011; 2014) call this process “social combat” in recent articles on bullying published in *American Sociological Review*. Their network analyses of bullying attacks corroborate the many narratives of students who participated in Milner’s (2004) study by showing that in order to move up in a student social hierarchy, other students



must be pushed down. During this ongoing combat for status, bullying is the primary method used for elevating one's status at the expense of another's.

Building from the notion that bullying takes place due to status competitions, this dissertation treats academics and extra-curricular activities as important yet understudied potential sources of low or high social status. More specifically, the potential associations between academics and extra-curricular activities are examined with a focus on how these associations may operate differently based on gender, race, and ethnicity. However, before outlining the subsequent chapters, it is necessary to define several important terms that are used in this study.

#### **CLARIFICATION OF KEY MEASURES AND TERMS**

Of paramount importance is how bullying is treated in this dissertation. Although Olweus (1993) provided a broad definition of bullying, outside observers could interpret many different types of interactions between students as bullying or simply harmless teasing in contrast. Physical aggression may seem to be a straightforward example of bullying however there may not be the same consensus on verbal aggression or other forms of harassment. The key for measuring bullying victimization here is that the measurements consist of *victimization as perceived by the student*. In terms of feeling the sting of stigma and the potential mental health consequences of bullying, it is important to remember that perception often becomes reality.

Based on the contested nature of what actually constitutes bullying, the dissertation nonetheless aims to measure bullying victimization in a variety of ways in order to make comparisons across different measurements of victimization. Although in each analysis each

measure will be clearly specified in a methodology section, the three measurements of bullying victimization will consist of students' reports of incidents of aggression, putdowns directed by other students, and a generic measure of simply whether or not a student reported being bullied in the most recent school semester. While the aggression incidents and generic measure of being bullied are referred to as bullying victimizations within the dissertation, feeling put down by other students is referred to as stigmatizations. This terminology is used to acknowledge the argument that there may be disagreement on the extent to which feeling put down by other students is an actual experience of being bullied. More conservatively it can still be referred to as being stigmatized which may nonetheless carry the damaging consequences of being singled out by peers.

As a key source of social status, extra-curricular activities play an important role in predicting variation in bullying victimization in each analysis in this dissertation. The important distinction in these activities is whether they are related to athletics or not. Thus, the first measure for extra-curricular activities included an indicator of whether or not a student participated on a varsity / interscholastic athletic team during the school year. Interscholastic athletics could have included baseball, softball, basketball, football, soccer, individual sports, other sports or cheerleading / pompom / drill team. For simplicity, it is referred to as "sports" or sports participation in the various analyses. The second measure for extra-curricular activities was how many school-sponsored activities not involving athletics a student participated in during the school year. The activities could have included musical or theatrical activities, student government, honors societies, school yearbook / newspaper / magazines, hobby, academic, or service clubs. This measure is referred to non-athletic extra-curricular activities in the dissertation. The choice to not include intra-mural athletic participation as a potential source of

status was made when considering intra-mural athletes not dot represent their school or perform in front of crowds of their peers when competing.

The final set of terms to be introduced includes academic attitudes, effort, and achievement. Attitudes were measured based on students' responses to how important it is to get good grades; effort is based on the amount of hours per week students reported spending on homework; finally, achievement was measured by students' 9<sup>th</sup> grade GPA as reported on their high school transcripts. If these three factors are referred to as a group of variables they are referred to as academics or academic factors. However, there are also instances in each analysis where it was necessary to compare the effects of one measure against another. In that case, the terms of attitudes, effort, and / or achievement were used specifically.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION**

As was already stated, the goal of the dissertation was to examine gender, racial, and ethnic inequality in bullying victimization while also taking into account students' schools as contextual mediators of victimization. In order to do so, several analyses were conducted through analysis of the ELS 2002 data. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the key literature that motivated each study. The review was organized to address each of the three analyses that were conducted.

Chapter 3 reports the first of the three analyses in the dissertation and focuses on gender differences in bullying victimization. The approach for this analysis was motivated by the notion suggested by many ethnographic studies that proving oneself to be masculine is incompatible with academic endeavors (Epstein 1998; Renold 2001; 2004; Morris 2008; 2012). Those researchers had noted that male students were teased and harassed for their reputations of being a

high achiever, heavy studier, or simply a good student. However, those were only case studies and did not directly address the extent to which the harassment was interpreted as bullying by the students being singled out. Thus, using nationally representative data with measures of student-reported bullying victimization allowed for the examination of potential relationships between academic factors and bullying victimization.

Chapter 4 which reports the second analysis changes the focus to variation in bullying victimization across Black, Asian, Latino, and White students. The contribution of this analysis is that comparisons are made across several groups in contrast to studies that have compared only Black and White students (Farkas, Lleras, and MacZuga 2002; Darnell and Ainsworth-Downey 2002; Wildhagen 2011) or Black students only (Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey 1998). Previous ethnographic studies had suggested that minority students were teased or harassed for doing well in school which was defined as “acting white” (Fordham and Ogbu 1986), however other qualitative work noted that similar harassment or resentment was directed towards lower SES white students as well (MacLeod 1995; Tyson, Darity, and Castellino 2005; Morris 2008). To examine the extent to which these case studies represented a larger pattern of bullying good students regardless of racial group membership, analyses predicting variation in bullying victimization for each of the racial groups were designed and implemented.

After these analyses, there was little evidence to suggest that Latino students were the victims of bullying. However, to examine the possibility that those results may have been an artifact of the ethnic and immigrant diversity within the Latino population, the third and final analysis focused on Latino students exclusively. The results from that analysis are reported in Chapter 5. Previous studies on Latinos in the U.S. have pointed to the importance of where Latino immigrants settle and how there is much more demographic diversity in where Latinos

currently live compared to any time prior to 1990 (Durand, Massey, and Chavret 2000; Durand, Massey, and Capoferro 2005; Kochhar, Suro, and Tafoya 2005). This consideration prompted the use of school location as an important mediator in the analysis of the extent to which Latino students are bullied and what extra-curricular or academic factors may be related to their victimization. The ELS data provided a large enough and diverse sample of Latino students for this final analysis.

Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation by reiterating the key findings from each analysis. Specific findings that are either consistent across each analysis or unique to one particular analysis are discussed for comparative purposes. Due to the multilevel nature of the research, the importance of both individual and school-level influences on bullying victimization are addressed. One of the major themes of this discussion is the potentially harmful effect that bullying victimization may have on students' future academic performance and aspirations. This concern accompanies much of the policy suggestions and opportunities for future research which conclude the chapter.

## **CHAPTER 2: KEY LITERATURE FOR EACH ANALYTICAL CHAPTER**

Ethnographies and case studies of students and the schools they attend have provided rich and detailed information on the educational experiences of students for many decades. The theme to be summarized in this chapter includes students' attitudes towards academic effort and achievement as documented by various types of fieldwork. In sociology of education and status attainment studies, these attitudes are well-established as key predictors of students' future educational achievement, attainment, and overall life chances (Sewell, Haller, and Portes 1969; Hallinan 1988; Kao and Tienda 2003). Additionally, large-scale quantitative studies inspired by and related to the qualitative literature will be reviewed. The large scale studies complement the detailed, personal stories of individual students by testing concepts and theories derived from qualitative research that are unable to be generalized to larger populations<sup>1</sup>.

One of the first researchers to undertake the project of studying American students in their communities and schools was Coleman (1961). After spending time collecting data from a diverse sample of nine high schools one of his main impressions concerned students' attitudes toward education. Specifically, he lamented over the possibility that goals such as athletic success and popularity were gaining in importance to teenagers compared to the traditional importance of academic achievement. Based on these observations, Coleman was one of the first to ponder the potential harmful effects these changes could bring to the education system and society as a whole. Today, declines in educational achievement are indeed a topic of national concern (U.S. Department of Education 2009; Crotty 2012). Similar to Coleman, in his ethnography of British working class teenage boys Willis (1977) documented detailed accounts of "lads" who rejected the importance of education in favor of practical jokes, manual labor, and

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<sup>1</sup>Of course, the validity of such examinations is up for debate depending on the applicability of quantitative measurements chosen to elucidate given concepts or theories.

chasing girls. The extent of subsequent research on social class, gender, and racial differences in educational attitudes motivated by these seminal works is too great to list here, however there are more recent studies that could provide similar inspiration for future research on students in today's education system.

Whereas these previous ethnographies and case studies focused on student attitudes and achievement, more recent research in both American and British schools has more closely documented student-to-student interaction, including bullying in some cases. The present chapter provides an argument that a similar influx of research on bullying can be precipitated if sociologists and educational researchers test the assumptions of ethnographies and case studies that have provided rich descriptions of the contexts in which peer bullying occurs. Victims of bullying face emotional hardships that inhibit students from achieving their full potential in school, making bullying a necessary area of study in future social science research (Smith, Pepler, and Rigby 2004; Arsenault et al. 2006; Beran, Hughes, and Lupart 2008; Jordan and Austin 2012). The particular subtopics to be discussed in this light include studies on students' performance of masculinity in schools, racial stratification and racial stereotypes in education, and the experience of immigrant students' assimilation into various communities via the education system. Building from the original focus on students' attitudes towards education (Coleman 1961; Willis 1977), it is suggested that in some cases these attitudes manifest in the form of peers bullying and stigmatizing their peers' effort, success, and / or failure. Beyond the aforementioned subtopics, school context and social class will be considered as integral facets of this agenda. Once each subtopic is outlined, ties to current bullying research will be made and gaps in the literature to be exploited by the subsequent dissertation research will be discussed.

## MASCULINITY STUDIES AND THE GENDER GAP IN EDUCATION

Citing advances in the theoretical understanding of gender such as “doing gender” and “hegemonic masculinity” Morris (2011) calls for these frameworks to be increasingly applied to research on gender and education. The need to prove one’s self as a “real man” exemplifies “doing gender” as it relates to heterosexual males; for young males in school doing gender often means displaying athletic prowess (Adler and Adler 1992; Eder and Kinney 1995; Renold 2001). The concept of doing gender points out that rather than a static characteristic, masculinity must be periodically negotiated and performed (Yancey-Martin 2003). The implication that masculinity involving athletic achievement, strength, and overall domination is privileged in society while other forms of masculinity are ignored denotes that this type of masculinity has become hegemonic (Connell 1995). Other ways of proving one’s worth such as intelligence or intellectual achievement are subordinated. The issues of identity and self-worth are particularly salient during adolescence as children begin to form their adult identities (Crosnoe 2000). In terms of future research, several qualitative studies using these gender frameworks could be used as springboards to larger scale quantitative research on gender and in-school bullying. In fact, ethnographies of students’ day to day experiences are ripe with bullying anecdotes.

For example, Renold (2004) noted that when given the option, choosing to remain in the school building rather than going outside to play sports for recess resulted in elementary-school-age boys being the victim of both physical assaults and name-calling. This echoes the centrality of sports and the marginality of academics in western conceptions of masculinity. Another aspect of this masculinity according to Epstein (1998) is the avoidance of academic work. Although it was understood by students that academic success was an integral part of achieving future success, the achievement was to be earned in secret or through as little effort as possible



so as to not put one's masculinity into question. Beyond masculinity, the avoidance of academic effort was also tied to the performance of heterosexuality according to Epstein: "The rejection of the perceived 'feminine' of academic work is simultaneously a defence against the 'charge' of being gay" (Epstein 1998). Pascoe (2007) made similar observations among high school students in the United States. She pointed out that the stereotypical image of a "nerd" was associated with femininity within a school's culture where male students were routinely subject to homophobic and misogynistic name-calling.

Whether physical in nature or based on name calling, Olweus (1993; 2001) would argue that both practices fall under the definition of bullying which can include physical, relational, verbal, or cyber-attacks designed to devalue the target. As the literature on the negotiation of masculinity in school has indicated, verbal attacks targeted at boys whom do not measure up to the standard of hegemonic masculinity tend to be the most common. The final example is Morris' (2012) comparison of students in one urban and one rural high school. Although he reports no physical bullying victimization, the combination of working hard at school and achieving success was met with homophobic name-calling in both contexts. The extent to which this behavior can be construed as bullying may be up for debate, but it does suggest at the very least that there is a stigmatization of male intellectualism that has been observed among many ethnographers in both England and the U.S. (Epstein 1998; Renold 2001; 2004; Pascoe 2007; Morris 2012). These questions and premises serve as the basis for future potential quantitative research.

One example of such quantitative research comes from Legewie and DiPrete (2012) who were interested in masculinity as a deterrent to academic engagement and its potential relationship to the gender gap in academic achievement among German students. They found

that peer socioeconomic status was a key mediator in the relationship. Specifically, low peer SES within classrooms was associated with an increased likelihood of attitudes among boys that suggested academic achievement was not masculine; higher SES classrooms did not subscribe to the same definition of masculinity on average. This difference helped explain the gender gap in reading test performance among German 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. To my knowledge, no other quantitative research has built from the previously mentioned ethnographies to test other consequences of the presence of hegemonic masculinity in various school settings. The literature on gender and bullying does point to some possibilities however.

### **Future research on Gender, Masculinity, and Bullying**

In general, the phenomenon of bullying is understood as a way to establish social hierarchies in school. Pellegrini and Bartini (2000) note that this often takes place after students transition to a new school, such as from elementary to middle school. With no existing hierarchies among the new mix of students, bullying often functions to develop hierarchies among groups of both boys and girls. The inevitable result is that some students' social statuses are subordinated (Brady 2004; Jordan and Austin 2012; Olweus 2001). This practice does not reflect a simple biological need to stratify or categorize, however. Crosnoe (2000) points out that adolescence is a pivotal time in the social-psychological development of one's identity, and to seek social status is one strategy of developing a positive identity. Further, the previously cited ethnographies of adolescents point out that doing gender is a common method that students use to both participate in jockeying for status while establishing their identities (Pascoe 2007; Morris 2012; also see Milner (2004) for a general theory on status competition in U.S. high schools). Thus the gender order already established in the local and school context becomes an avenue for which students are able to develop their identities and compete for status. Bullying

fits in as the previous studies suggested because the hierarchies (at least among male students) are established and re-established by feminizing males who do not adhere to the standards of hegemonic masculinity.

What is interesting about comparing the bullying literature to this perspective is that quantitative studies of bullying clearly indicate that when male students are bullied, the type of bullying tends to be physical in nature (Hoover, Oliver, and Hazler 1992; Whitney and Smith 1993; Jeffrey, Miller, and Linn 2001). This stands in contrast to the student / school ethnographies that identified homophobic name calling as the most prevalent form of bullying and subordinating male students (Epstein 1998; Pascoe 2007; Morris 2012). This contrast points to a question that can be tested empirically with large-scale quantitative data. When considering that the previous quantitative studies were focused on only one local area / region and that the presence of an ethnographer may deter physical bullying, national-level survey data are needed to ascertain broader patterns of bullying victimization among academically oriented students. Chapter 3 reports the analysis of various forms of bullying victimization based on gender and academic qualities to test the implications of both literatures.

Morris (2012) points out that the local and school context shapes how masculinity is perceived and enacted, so multilevel modeling was used to take school-level factors into account in Chapter 3. In a study of Finnish students' qualitative descriptions of bullying, Hamarus and Kaikkonen (2008) found that bullying via name calling varies based on local social context and local subjective experiences among students. Thus, variables such as local urbanicity, rurality, and school SES were important factors in teasing out the specific scenarios where students are most at risk for bullying victimization. Further, social status in school is not dictated by gender performances alone; Morris (2012) and Pascoe (2007) both devoted chapters of their work to the

examination of how race and racial inequality impact students' interactions, identities, and educational endeavors. The next section of this paper connects ethnographic research centered on those topics to research on bullying and stigmatization of those who exhibit academic effort and achievement.

## **RACIAL STRATIFICATION IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

Beyond the gender gap in education, explanations for racial differences in academic achievement have been studied extensively by ethnographers. Once again, attitudes towards academics and the policing of those attitudes through stigmatization and bullying have been documented. For example, John Ogbu and colleagues described a collective identity among African American students that rejected the importance of academic work and striving for good grades (Ogbu 1978; 1987; Fordham and Ogbu 1986). The notion that African American students attending segregated, impoverished schools developed these attitudes in collective defiance against the dominant social structure which privileges whiteness emerged from their observations. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) even noted that peer groups reinforced the importance of this stance through name calling and physical victimization of others who displayed academic effort and striving. The authors hypothesized that these attitudes and behaviors may contribute to the black-white gap in academic achievement which was and continues to be a topic of significant interest (Mickelson 1990; Downey 2008).

A debate ensued among quantitative researchers using the NELS:88 data who attempted to test the generalizability of the hypothesis. At first, Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey (2002) found that African American students who were perceived by other classmates as good students were also viewed as popular students in their school which casted doubt on the existence of an

oppositional culture. However, Farkas, Lleras, and MacZuga (2002) limited their analysis to African American students in high-minority schools and found that when they were perceived to be good students they were more likely to feel put down by other students in class. This finding was questioned nonetheless because it was only in reference to white female students rather than other African American students perceived to be academically weaker (Downey and Ainsworth-Darnell 2002).

Both Ogbu (2004) and Fordham (2008) critiqued this work for over-simplifying their theoretical framework; they pointed out that sanctioning African American peers who worked hard at school was only one strategy for coping with job ceilings they were likely to face in adulthood. Further, the practice does not represent a monolithic “culture” opposed to education even within low income, segregated schools. Other ethnographies also pointed out that some African American peer groups are supportive of academic effort and success (Horvat and Lewis 2003; Carter 2005) while white students have also been stigmatized for similar behavior in majority white schools with lower average student SES (Tyson, Darity Jr., and Castellino 2005; Morris 2008). This literature displays the potential downfall of using large scale, national data to test the generalizability of personal accounts detailed in a small number of settings. Using available data may not fully capture the complex nuances of daily experiences ethnographers are able to depict.

Nonetheless, this body of literature represents another example of the importance of peer groups in students’ educational experiences. It raises further questions concerning which students in which contexts are the subject of peer stigmatization and bullying directed at students who exhibit academic orientations. Quantitative researchers can improve upon previous attempts to build from the ethnographic findings by expanding analyses beyond African American

students only and by including more measures of academic orientations, school context, and peer influences. A more recent national-scale education dataset such as the ELS:2002 project is a suitable resource for such a task. To enable cross-cohort comparisons with the NELS:88 cohort, student participants in ELS were first surveyed during their sophomore year of high school and were asked many of the same questions as the members of the NELS cohort. Researchers have begun to tap these data because they not only contain the same measures concerning students being put down by classmates, but also include several measures of bullying victimization. This was a primary motivation in using the ELS 2002 data for this dissertation.

### **Stereotypes and Future Research on Race, Academics, and Bullying**

For example, minority students have reported being bullied in concert with racial stereotypes. Such stereotypes consist of notions that African American students have inferior intellectual capabilities (Steele 1997; Kao 2000) but are naturally gifted in athletics (Peguero, Popp, and Koo 2011), that Latino students are illegal aliens or destined for manual labor (Peguero 2012; Kao 2000), and that all Asian students are naturally gifted at mathematics and science (Chow and Feagin 2008; Lee 2009). Testing the extent to which the findings from those case studies and ethnographies can explain larger trends in students' educational experiences have proved fruitful as well. Through the analysis of large scale national data, researchers have found that breaking racial stereotypes can increase one's risk of bullying victimization.

For example, in an analysis of ELS data, Peguero and Williams (2011) found that when African American students have high standardized test scores, they are more likely to be bullied. This suggests the possibility that when African American students refute the "lack of intelligence" stereotype, they may be subject to bullying for doing so. The same pattern was

found for Asian American students however. Thus, signs of intelligence resulted in bullying whether or not the groups' stereotype was associated with intelligence or lack of intelligence. This is another example of both an academically privileged and non-privileged group being negatively evaluated as a result of a positive academic quality (see Tyson, et al. 2005).

Additionally, these results were significant across a sample of both male and female students. It is further evidence that the bullying of academically oriented students may be more widespread than among only a small subculture of students. Thus, further research on white, Asian, Latino and African American students' educational attributes and bullying was warranted. Chapter 4 in this dissertation reports analyses of bullying victimization that were conducted separately for each of those four groups.

Peguero and Williams (2011) suggest that the inconsistent findings could be due to standardized test scores not being public knowledge among students making the targeting of high scoring students difficult. However, other measures of achievement such as GPA or the amount of homework students do (also available in ELS) may be indicators that are more obvious to other students. The analyses in Chapter 4 used those variables to study how the relationship between academic factors and bullying operated for the various racial / ethnic groups. In particular, the work of Ogbu (1978; 1987), Fordham and Ogbu (1986), and other ethnographers (Tyson, Darity Jr., and Castellino 2005; Morris 2013) highlighted academic effort as a risk factor in bullying victimization which further emphasizes the potential importance of time spent on homework. The analyses presented in Chapter 4 examine the extent to which these patterns generalize to larger populations of students in various racial and ethnic groups. The extent to which students can either hide this behavior or distract their peers from it may influence potential

victimization as well. Thus, students' extra-curricular activities and sources of friends' support are included in those analyses.

In summary, there are many factors beyond individual race that influence the risk of being bullied for working hard at academics. Just as in the previous section, many studies involving race, academics, and bullying argue that local and school contexts contribute to substantial variation in the way academics are viewed by students (Ogbu 1978; 1987; Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Horvat and Lewis 2003; Tyson, Darity Jr., and Castellino 2005). Peer groups are also important sources of either antagonism or social support (Tatum 1997; Horvat and Lewis 2003) when considering that bullying takes place between students. Thus, beyond the current dissertation, characteristics of students' friends and peer groups could be considered as well in studies of race, academics, and bullying.

## **IMMIGRATION, ASSIMILATION, AND EDUCATIONAL STRATIFICATION**

Beyond the status of being a racial minority, being an immigrant adds another dimension when examining racial and ethnic stratification in education. This section details accounts of both disadvantages and advantages immigrant students have experienced which depend on a complex set of factors including ethnicity, generational status, and locality. Like the previous sections, ethnographic / case study accounts will shed light on the bullying and stigmatizing experiences of students and how future research on the bullying and stigmatization of academic success can be informed by the previous research. Those insights helped to motivate the final analyses in the dissertation which are reported in Chapter 5.

In studies of immigration and social mobility, the segmented assimilation perspective recognizes that achieving upward mobility is not an automatic and uniform process for



immigrants and their families (Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou 1997). A key tenet of this perspective is that although most families arrive with high aspirations and expectations for their children's upward mobility, barriers in the U.S. educational and occupational structure can seriously temper the hopes of the children of immigrants. For example, Kao and Tienda (1998) tracked students' educational aspirations from middle school to graduation and found that in middle school Latino students' aspirations were on par with other groups, but over time they decreased. This large-scale quantitative study was able to confirm what case studies of immigrant students, their schools, and families had speculated on. The following cases all speak to the variation in how immigrant students' efforts and successes in school have been treated by both peers and teachers.

In central California, stigmatization and bullying perpetrated by white students (who constituted the majority group in the school) was reserved for Mexican immigrant students who showed promise in school while Japanese students endured no such problems in the same school (Matute-Bianchi 1986). This observation was consistent with the expectation that stereotypes of Asian students' intellectual superiority would make academic success normal and unremarkable among this group (Lee 2009; Peguero and Williams 2011). Other groups such as Haitian immigrant students in southern Florida were subject to discrimination and segregation based on skin color (Portes and Zhou 1993). The students were channeled into social groups and networks of impoverished African American students who held similar reservations about academic success as described by Ogbu (1978; 1987). For the Haitian students, there was a tension between dreams of upward mobility and the stigma associated with academic effort and achievement based on a dismal economic reality. Similar educational burdens experienced by Caribbean immigrants in New York City were documented by Lopez (2003). Poverty,

dilapidated schools, and teachers' low expectations (particularly for boys) contributed to a sense that the American dream was unattainable.

The fact that many teachers expressed opinions that the boys were prone to violence and crime is of further importance; it shows that gender cannot be divorced from the discussion.

Other case studies of immigrant students of various ethnicities echo the notion that peers can be sources of antagonism as immigrant students pursue education and the American dream (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001; Olsen 2008; Lee 2009). Similarly, In England, students of Pakistani and Indian descent were regularly the victims of both inter and intra-ethnic school bullying in communities studied by Eslea and Mukhtar (2010). In summary, these qualitative and case study accounts paint a picture of how race, gender, and immigrant status intersect to form barriers immigrant students have faced in the struggle for upward mobility. In terms of United States immigration, special attention should be paid to Latino students' schooling and bullying experiences in the future because of the demographic growth Latinos are projected to experience in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau 2010).

### **Latino Students, Immigrant Destination, and Bullying**

As members of the largest and fastest growing minority group in the U.S., Latino students' experiences and achievements in school will play a large role in shaping the social fabric of the U.S. moving forward. Although it is well documented that these students achieve at lower rates than Asian and white students on a host of measures such as grades, test scores, and attainment (Kao and Thompson 2003; Grodsky, Warren, and Felts 2008), much less is known about Latino students' bullying victimization (which could act as yet another barrier to educational success). In terms of racial group differences, Hanish and Guerra (2000) found that

Latino students were more likely to be physically bullied compared to African American students. However, research drawing from previous studies from the segmented assimilation perspective found that Latino students from families that had lived in the U.S. for at least three generations were bearing the brunt of the victimization (Peguero 2009). These findings point to the importance of comparing newly arriving immigrants to those who have been established in the country for a longer time. More recent developments in Latino immigration point to further potential to understand the experiences of Latino students in school.

For many decades, Latinos had settled in a few select locations in the U.S. including southern California, Texas, southern Florida, and large cities such as New York and Chicago (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002). The most recent demographic and migration patterns indicate that Latinos have been spreading out beyond those traditional areas (Durand, Massey, and Chavret 2000; Durand, Massey, and Capoferro 2005; Kochhar, Suro, and Tafoya 2005). It was hypothesized that when Latinos settled in the aforementioned *traditional* destinations, crime rates went down due to the stable established ethnic enclaves that provided social and economic support to new arrivals (Sampson 2008). On the other hand, Shihadeh and Barranco (2012) show that crime goes up when Latinos settle in *new* destinations where the population influx combined with a lack of social support contributes to social disorganization. If criminological outcomes vary by destination type, educational outcomes may as well. Stamps and Bohon (2006) note that Latinos' have higher educational attainment in new destinations for example.

For the purposes of the current topic of bullying victimization in school, testing for similar differences is the focus for Chapter 5. For example, if Latino students in new destinations are viewed as economic threats to established residents as has been reported in various case studies of immigration (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001; Portes and Zhou

1993; Zhou 1997), they may be more likely to be victims of bullying. On the other hand, when considering bullying directed towards academic effort and achievement, perhaps Latino students in traditional destinations may be more at risk due to the presence of more readily available economic opportunities that do not require advanced education. This would be more consistent with rural white male students' stigmatization of academic effort and achievement on account of expecting to work as a tradesman or manual laborer immediately after high school (Morris 2013). Regardless, by utilizing the ELS data and its information on where students attend school, both possibilities are examined in Chapter 5. Generation status, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and school location were key factors in those analyses.

### **Summary and the Ever-Present Role of Social Class**

While gender, race, ethnicity, and immigration are all major stratifying factors in education, it was also important to consider social class as many ethnographers cited in this article have. Starting with Willis (1977) we began to see how one's realistic future economic opportunities (which are filtered through one's social class position) shaped students' attitudes towards school and how they perceived high achieving classmates. This has turned out to be a useful perspective whether researchers' primary focus was on gender (Epstein 1998; Renold 2004; Morris 2013), racial identity (Fordham and Ogbu 1986) or comparisons between race groups (MacLeod 1995; Tyson, Darity Jr., and Castellino 2002). In all of these cases, low SES contexts tended to correlate with the bullying and / or stigmatization of academically oriented students being more acceptable. If researchers continue to study the immigrant experience as moderated through education systems, this will be an important point to remember as well.

Of course, although it is acknowledged that starting in a low position in stratification systems present many barriers to upward mobility, it by no means suggests that disadvantaged students cannot persevere and defeat the barriers in front of them on the way to a better life. The current literature on bullying however points out that being the victim of bullying is just one more barrier that can stand in someone's way as they pursue academic achievement. Whether it is based on racism, prejudice, or a cynical view of the value of education, bullying has academic, physiological, and mental-health consequences that must continue to be addressed in the U.S. and internationally (Smith, Pepler, and Rigby 2004; Beran, Hughes, and Lupart 2008; Swearer et al. 2010; Jordan and Austin 2012). As the studies reviewed here have pointed out, school context in terms of socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic diversity as well as geographical location are all factors related to educational stratification, but also the extent to which bullying may be practiced among students.

## **CHAPTER 3: GENDER DIFFERENCES IN BULLYING VICTIMIZATION: THE ROLE OF ACADEMICS AND SCHOOL CONTEXT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Bullying encompasses a range of victimizations including being attacked verbally, physically, and socially by peers (Olweus 1993; 2001; Espelage and Swearer 2003). Verbal attacks include being called names or otherwise mocked by peers, physical bullying involves being hit or having one's property stolen or destroyed, and bullying at the hands of several peers at once includes being the subject of negative rumors and / or social isolation. In other words, far from students simply "picking on" each other, bullying is a multi-faceted phenomenon.

In the United States it is anecdotally accepted that fitting the stereotype of a "nerd" is associated with an increased risk of being bullied and stigmatized (Kinney 1993; Milner 2004). The introduction to Pascoe's (2007) ethnography of a suburban middle-class high school provides a glimpse into nerds' status in American high schools. She describes a talent show skit where two male students transform from weak, glasses-wearing boys to strong, masculine men who are able to save their girlfriends from danger. This portrayal by two popular male students suggests a low social status for male students who do not conform to the ideal image of masculinity as achieved by the actors at the end of the skit.

Moreover, the direct bullying of the stereotypical nerd could be another indicator that intellectualism, in some contexts, may be devalued among U.S. school students. The notion of education being devalued has been described through case studies conducted in various school contexts. Dating to Coleman's (1961) research on peer cultures in high school, there is a tradition of observational research that has catalogued students' rejection of the educational

system and their disdain for others who comply with it (Epstein 1998; Fordham and Ogbu 1986; MacLeod 1995; Morris 2008; Willis 1977). These studies did not explicitly focus on bullying nonetheless, and few large scale quantitative studies have examined the actual bullying of successful students in the United States. Peguero and Williams (2011) examined the extent to which deviating from racial educational stereotypes resulted in bullying victimization, however few studies have examined gender, educational success, and bullying (see Popp et al. forthcoming for an exception and Popp and Peguero (2011a) for a study on gender, extracurricular activities, and bullying). The current study seeks to add to the literature by specifically determining the extent to which academic attitudes, effort, and achievement (characteristics typically linked to nerds) make one more or less likely to be bullied. Building from previous anecdotal studies of student cultures that have devalued the importance of education and academic achievement, the current study estimates how academic attitudes, behavior, and achievement predict bullying victimization net of other student characteristics among a nationally representative cohort of United States high school sophomores. To control for contextual predictors of bullying victimization, characteristics of students' schools are accounted for as well.

### **Individual and School Predictors of Bullying Victimization**

Various characteristics of individual students stratify the likelihood of being bullied. For example, male students are more likely to be physically bullied than female students (Hoover et al. 1992; Jeffrey et al. 2001). Bullying can be directed towards racial and ethnic difference (Peguero 2012; Goldweber et al. 2013), disability (Marini et al. 2001), and many other markers of difference. Delinquent behavior exposes adolescents to increased risk of victimization as well (Schreck, Miller, and Gibson 2003).

Above and beyond individual characteristics, because bullying often occurs within the social context of a school, the schools students attend also influence the relative risk of being a bullying victim (Espelage and Swearer 2003). For example, factors related to school social disorder such as urbanicity, poverty, and lack of social control increase the risk of bullying victimization regardless of students' individual characteristics (Bradshaw et al. 2009; Goldweber et al. 2013). On the other hand, "academic press" or the extent to which students and teachers have high expectations for academic achievement curbs the chances of bullying victimization (Ma 2001). There is more debate on the effect of school size; one argument is that schools with large enrollments have a higher chance of containing more bullying aggressors (Stewart 2003; Bradshaw et al. 2009), while the counter to that logic is that schools with a smaller, more intimate size make bullying repeated by the same aggressor more likely (Klein and Cornell 2010; Ma 2001). Studies have also suggested that bullying is common in rural schools (Farmer et al. 2011) and that the rate of bullying may be higher in rural schools compared to urban and suburban schools (Nansel et al. 2001).

### **Bullying: Psychological, Social, and Academic Consequences**

Pellegrini and Bartini (2000) note that bullying often takes place due to the need to establish status hierarchies when students transition from one stage of school to another (middle school to high school for example). Rather than an instinctual need however, social scientists recognize that these behaviors are related to adolescence being a pivotal time for identity construction (Crosnoe 2000). In the socially ambiguous setting of a new school that lacks social organization among peers, students tend to employ various forms of aggression to establish dominance and higher social status over other students (Pellegrini and Bartini 2000). For male students, the aggression often manifests in the form of physical attacks while female students



tend to bully through gossip and other conversational attacks aimed at emotions (Hoover et al. 1992; Jeffrey et al. 2001; Whitney and Smith 1993). Regardless of the type of bullying, the jockeying for status in school is typically a stressful experience. Although these behaviors may be intended to increase one's social status, a review of bullying research notes that the act of bullying as well as bullying victimization is related to depression, increased anxiety, and lower self-esteem (Jordan and Austin 2012). A vicious cycle can take place where the bully victims also become bullies in hopes of repairing self-esteem that was damaged due to bullying victimization (Haynie et al. 2001; Ma 2001).

Academic-related consequences of bullying include problems such as poor academic achievement (Arsenault et al. 2006; Beran, Hughes, and Lupart 2008; Nakamoto and Schwartz 2010; Juvonen 2011), decreased classroom participation (Ladd, Harold-Brown, and Reiser 2008), negative evaluations from teachers (Juvonen, Wang, and Espinoza 2011), detachment from school (Wei and Williams 2004; Popp and Peguero 2011b), and academic withdrawal (Smith et al. 2004). Bullying victimization is associated with increased fear of being victimized in the future which hampers concentration in school (Addington and Yablon 2011).

Avoiding the devaluation associated with being bullied would be consistent with Goffman's (1963) model of stigmatization where the stigmatized individual adapts by rejecting the social context their stigma is associated with. This suggests that bullying, particularly if directed towards intellectualism or the "nerd" stereotype, may inhibit and even deter academic success. Such a possibility has serious implications for the U.S. education system, warranting continued research on bullying in school. Reviewed next are the ethnographic studies and related quantitative research that suggest bullying of intellectually oriented students is a common occurrence and a valid concern.

## **The Stigmatization and Bullying of Academic Attitudes, Effort and Achievement**

James Coleman (1961) was the first education researcher to highlight how athletic success was a far better predictor of male popularity compared to academic success among high school students. Subsequent studies of students and their general value of intellectual pursuits have various commonalities with Coleman's original insight. In Great Britain, Willis (1977) observed the daily life of a group of males called the "lads" who generally were not interested in homework or doing well in school. They were more concerned with making money, practical jokes, and sexual encounters with girls. In addition, they othered their male peers who conformed to the dominant educational expectations of working hard to achieve academic success. Specifically, the lads defined themselves as more masculine and more mature than the males who did well in school. They interpreted that a masculine image was the most appropriate to display, which consequently was antithetical to an academic or intellectual image.

Among elementary-aged students in Great Britain, specific instances of bullying directed at boys perceived to have inadequate masculinity have been observed. Renold (2001) for instance found that doing well in school and being studious were viewed as signs of femininity and were sanctioned through bullying. One way to avoid the sanctions however was to be proficient in athletics. Similarly, in a later publication Renold (2004) noted that boys who chose to remain indoors to do schoolwork when given the opportunity to go outside and play sports were sanctioned. The bullying she observed included both verbal and physical abuse. Epstein (1998) made similar observations among British school children including bullying enacted through homophobic and misogynistic name calling. Again, male students showing an inclination towards academic pursuits were the main target of this bullying. Homophobic name calling was also observed by Pascoe (2007) among middle class high school students in the U.S.

Although not directed at any academic qualities, the insults were purposeful tactics at establishing one's own masculine identity according to Pascoe. It is important to point out that these studies do not indicate that anti-intellectualism was an automatic precursor to bullying. Rather, *male* intellectualism when perceived as a feminine characteristic was often stigmatized and sanctioned. Thus the implication of this literature is that perceived femininity may be a mechanism involved in bullying male students when they are deemed to have intellectual qualities.

Related to the efforts of male students to establish masculine identities is the observation made by Epstein (1998, 97) about the avoidance of academic work: "The rejection of the perceived 'feminine' of academic work is simultaneously a defence against the 'charge' of being gay". According to male students she interacted with, the ideal strategy was to nonetheless do well in school, but do so with as little effort as possible (in order to avoid being stigmatized and / or bullied). Legewie and DiPrete's (2012) research on German elementary students' reading and math achievement stands as one quantitative example that supports the notion of masculinity as a deterrent to academic achievement. The caveat is that peer socioeconomic status is a key mediator in the relationship. Specifically, low peer SES within classrooms was associated with an increased likelihood of attitudes among boys that suggested academic achievement was not masculine; higher SES classrooms did not subscribe to the same definition of masculinity on average.

In returning to ethnographic research, a more recent ethnography of high school students in the United States published by Morris (2008) focuses on similar themes. In a rural working class school he found that many male students aspired to average grades in hopes of avoiding being called names and otherwise stigmatized. When observations from an urban high school

were included for the purposes of comparison (2012), similar themes emerged. Although no physical bullying was observed, the failure to display masculinity while focusing on schoolwork and academic achievement was met with homophobic name calling. The extent to which this behavior can be construed as bullying may be up for debate, but it does suggest at the very least that there is a stigmatization of male intellectualism that has been observed among many ethnographers in both Europe and the U.S. Further, this practice has been observed both in elementary aged (Epstein 1998; Renold 2001; 2004) and high school (Morris 2008; 2012) students attending school in various types of communities.

In summary of these studies and in connection with previous scholarship on bullying, one can assume that Olweus (1993; 2001) would classify both physical abuse and name calling as bullying, however we cannot be certain that students share the same definitions. Further, students nearing or not far removed from school transitions (from elementary to middle school or from middle school to high school) have apparently engaged in bullying directed at academically oriented males. Thus, the need to establish social hierarchies at a time when students are going through physical changes and entering new social (school) settings (Pellegrini and Bartini 2000; Crosnoe 2000; Milner 2004) may be carried out in the form of bullying male students who tend to be more academically oriented. Without previous empirical backing however, this is the thesis to be tested in this chapter.

## **THE CURRENT STUDY: GENDER, ACADEMICS, AND A MULTILEVEL ANALYSIS OF BULLYING VICTIMIZATION**

Although the previous studies suggest that male students are more likely to be bullied if they have a reputation as an intellectual, that notion has not been tested through the analysis of quantitative large scale data. This study sought to test those assumptions by using data

previously collected for the Education Longitudinal Study (ELS) of 2002. The study did not assume that all male students who display various indications of intellectualism are automatically bullied however. Despite the many accounts of good students being bullied in various ways, the literature also indicates that certain social statuses could shield students from being bullied even if they were good students. For example, among male students especially, varsity athletic success has been a consistent predictor of popularity (Coleman 1961) as well as a symbol of masculinity (Adler et al. 1992). Renold (2001; 2004) and Morris (2008; 2012) both noted in their observations that athletic achievement was one way attention could be diverted away from academic achievements. Thus, the status of being an athlete may trump the reputation of being a good student. To take into account the segregation of students in schools due to academic tracking, being in a college-prep track was also controlled for. This takes into account the possibility that students in more intellectually focused classes will be insulated from less-academically oriented students in lower tracks (Hallinan 1988).

Along the same lines, the study did not assume that being a good student is the only reason a student may be more or less likely to be bullied. Therefore, gender, race, multiraciality, socioeconomic status, and disability status were taken into account as control variables in all analyses. At the school-level, local urbanicity / rurality, and school size were controlled for as well as characteristics of the student body including the percentage receiving free and reduced-price lunches and the percent on a college-prep track. These characteristics account for many individual and contextual effects found to be relevant in previous bullying research. Another measure of school context controlled for is the school principal's perception of the frequency which student bullying occurs at the school.

Indicators of intellectualism (or the colloquial term, nerd) included measurements of achievement, effort put towards achievement, and academic attitudes; they relate directly to the study's hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: After controlling for individual and school characteristics, male students who exhibit attitudes in support of the importance of academic achievement will be more likely to report being bullied at school.

Hypothesis 2: After controlling for individual and school characteristics, male students who exhibit high effort directed towards academic achievement will be more likely to report being bullied at school.

Hypothesis 3: After controlling for individual and school characteristics, male students who exhibit high academic achievement will be more likely to report being bullied at school.

To initially test each hypothesis, separate regression models were run for male and female students. Research previously cited suggested that bullying and stigmatization directed at intellectualism tends to affect male victims, so this strategy provided for a test of that assumption. Comparisons between male and female students' victimization therefore served as an important diagnostic analysis. School-level effects also had to be accounted for, thus in the second set of analyses each hypothesis was also tested with multilevel modeling for the three bullying outcomes. This type of analysis accounted for ELS' hierarchical data structure (students nested within schools) and parsed out student-level and school-level effects on the dependent variable. Male and female students were aggregated back into one sample for this analysis so that sufficient nesting of students within schools was present (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002; Glennie and Stearns 2012). Variations of the standard hierarchical linear modeling

procedure were employed as necessary depending on the distribution of the dependent variable being analyzed.

## **METHODS**

### **Data and Sample**

The ELS base-year questionnaire was chosen as the data source for this study. The questionnaire was administered during students' sophomore year in high school. Data collection took place in 2002 after the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) selected a sample of 750 schools from across the United States. From each school, a sample of students was selected to participate. The analytic sample in this chapter consists of 12,412 students nested within 575 schools. These students had complete data on all bullying measurements as well as sampling weights at the individual and school level. The schools contained at least 15 students that fit into the criteria of being selected for this analysis. During the base-year ELS data collection, students were asked questions referring to their individual characteristics, school activities, experiences of being bullied, and several measures of academic attitudes, effort, and achievement which made the data ideal for examining the relationship between being academically oriented and bullying victimization. Disaggregated by gender, the sample contained 6331 students who identified as female and 6081 students who identified as male.

### **Dependent Variables**

To account for the various ways students may perceive bullying victimization, three separate measures were constructed. First, a composite measure was created from responses to four survey items concerning in-school victimization. These items referred to events such as being threatened with physical harm, being hit, having money or other possessions forcefully taken,

and being bullied. This measure accounted for a wide range of perceived victimizations encompassed under Olweus' (2001) definition of bullying. For each item, the student could report that an event happened never, once or twice, or more than twice during the first semester of their sophomore year. For each item, never was coded with a 0, once or twice was coded with a 1, and more than twice was coded with a 2. Aggregating the response to each item into one measure of bullying victimization resulted in a scale ranging from 0-8 ( $\alpha = .73$ ). This measure is referred to as *bullying incidents*.

The second dependent variable was used to account for the possibility that the previous measure is mostly physical in nature, making male students more likely to have experienced those victimizations regardless of their academic pursuits (see Hoover et al. 1992; Whitney and Smith 1993; Jeffrey et al. 2001). This more gender-neutral measurement was derived from a survey item which asked students the extent to which they agreed with the statement that "I often feel put down by other students in class". Response options were strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree and were measured 1-4. This ordinal measure, also based on student self-report, is referred to as *putdowns*.

The third and final dependent variable consisted of a single item that contributed to the first dependent variable (*bullying incidents*). The item measured whether a student reported being bullied or picked on never, once or twice, or more than twice in the first semester of their sophomore year. The 'once or twice' and 'more than twice' responses were collapsed into one category making this a binary (0, 1) variable where 1 indicates the student reported being bullied or picked on. This measure was referred to as *literal bullying* because it only measures students' perceptions of bullying victimization as specifically prompted by the words "bullied or picked on". It was used as a stricter test of the relationship between gender, bullying, and



intellectualism when considering that the two previous variables tapped physical / property victimizations and putdowns that may not always be perceived as bullying by students. *Literal bullying* in contrast measures the response to the explicit question of whether or not a student felt bullied. Table 3.1 presents the correlations between the three dependent variables. The relative lack of strong correlations suggests the three variables do tap different types of experiences associated with being bullied and / or stigmatized.

Table 3.1: Summary of Dependent Variables and Correlations

	Measurement	Mean	S.D.
Bullying Incidents	0-8	.84	1.36
Putdowns	1-4	1.92	.71
Literal Bullying	0, 1	.20	-
	Bullying Incidents	Putdowns	Literal Bullying
Bullying Incidents	1.00		
Putdowns	.334	1.00	
Literal Bullying	.668	.307	1.00

Source: Educational Longitudinal Study, National Center for Education Statistics, N=12,412

### **Academic Attitude, Effort and Achievement**

To measure indicators of being intellectually focused, measures of academic attitudes, effort, and achievement were included in the analysis. Attitude was measured by students' responses to the survey item, "How important are good grades to you?" where students could respond "not important", "somewhat important", "important", or "very important". Responses were coded 1-4 where 1 indicated "not important". Effort was measured by combining students' reported number of hours per week spent on homework both in and out of school during the

previous semester. Due to a positive skew, this variable was transformed with a log transformation. Academic achievement was measured by students' 9<sup>th</sup> grade GPA as indicated by official transcripts obtained by the NCES. GPA ranged from 0-4. In addition to these three variables, three interaction terms were created to directly measure the effect of being a male student multiplied by their academic attitudes, effort, and achievement respectively.

### **School Characteristics**

Characteristics of students' schools could have influenced the extent to which they were exposed to bullying victimization regardless of individual characteristics or academic orientations and thus were controlled for. School location was controlled for through two binary variables. One indicated that the school was located in an urban area and the other indicated the school was in a rural area (reference group, suburban area) as determined by the NCES Common Core of Data (CCD). The CCD also collected data related to school size and school socioeconomic status. School size was measured as the number of students in grades 9-12 enrolled in the school. This positively skewed variable was also transformed with a log transformation. As a proxy for school socioeconomic status, a categorical measure of the percent of students receiving free and reduced price lunches was controlled for. The percentile categories were 0-5, 6-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-50, 51-75, and 76-100 as organized by the NCES. Survey data collected from each school's principal accounted for the final two school-level measures. To measure the overall academic climate in the school, the percentage of the student body on a college-prep track according to the principal was controlled for. Finally, to measure the extent of bullying behavior going on across the school, the extent to which student bullying was often a problem at the school as reported by the school's principal was controlled for. The principal could respond "never happens", "happens on occasion", "happens at least once a

month”, “happens at least once a week”, or “happens daily”. Responses were coded 1-5 where 1 indicated “never happens”.

### **Individual Characteristics**

Several control variables at the individual level consisted of a series of binary variables. These variables indicated student characteristics such as being male, Asian / Pacific Islander, African American, Hispanic, Multiracial, that the student was a member of any inter-scholastic athletic team during their sophomore year, and that the student was in a college-prep curriculum. Disability status was also measured as a binary variable that indicated a student was a member of one or more federal disability categories and participated in an individualized education program at his or her school. ELS compiled the disability information based on reports from school personnel. Socioeconomic status (SES) was controlled for through a composite and weighted measure. As part of the base-year data collection, ELS surveyed students’ parents / guardians and compiled information concerning their education, income, and occupational prestige. This information was linked to individual students to produce the composite measure of student SES. The measure was weighted to have a mean of 0. Finally, getting into physical fights at school, skipping school, and otherwise getting in trouble at school as reported by the student were controlled for to account for the correlation between misbehavior and bullying victimization. All three types of misbehavior were coded as either 0 = the event never happened, 1 = it happened once or twice, 2 = it happened more than twice. All three items were then combined into one index ranging from 0-6 to create the misbehavior variable ( $\alpha = .84$ ). Means, standard deviations, and measurements of individual, school, and academic variables are described in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Descriptive Statistics: Individual, School, and Academic Variables

	Measurement	Mean	S.D.
<i>Individual</i>			
Male	0,1	.49	-
Asian	0,1	.10	-
Black	0,1	.13	-
Hispanic	0,1	.15	-
SES	-2.11 – 1.82	.04	.74
Multiracial	0,1	.05	-
Disability	0,1	.06	-
Sports	0,1	.52	-
College Prep	0,1	.55	-
Misbehavior	0-6	1.10	1.33
<i>School</i>			
Urban	0,1	.33	-
Rural	0,1	.18	-
Size <sup>a</sup>	75 – 4,498	1241.82	798.63
% Free Lunch	1 – 7	3.14	1.91
% College Prep	0-100	62.39	32.87
Bullying Problems	1 – 5	2.40	.77
<i>Academic</i>			
Importance of Good Grades	1 – 4	3.38	.73
Hours Spent on Homework per Week <sup>a</sup>	0 – 47	10.83	9.04
GPA	0 - 4	2.76	.81

<sup>a</sup> The log of this variable was used in all analyses.

Source: ELS, NCES, N=12,412

### **Multilevel Analysis**

The design of this study’s analysis intended to control for factors already related to bullying victimization by previous research before testing for the effects of being male and academically oriented. Multilevel modeling was necessary to employ when considering both individual and school characteristics may influence the extent to which a student is bullied at school. In the analysis, individual characteristics were entered into the equation in model 1.

Next, school characteristics were included in model 2. Then, the three academic variables were added in model 3. Finally, the three interactions between being male and academic attitude, effort, and achievement were added in the fourth and final model. Random effects and cross-level interactions were not significant, thus all regression coefficients except for the intercept were fixed / held constant. Independent variables were centered on their group means to allow for meaningful interpretations of the coefficients (Raudenbusch and Bryk 2002). The varying distributions for each dependent variable necessitated separate multilevel modeling techniques, however.

The outcome *bullying victimizations* is measured as a count of the times a student reported being bullied in various ways (although the highest response for any item was “more than twice” so as to reduce the potential skew of the variable). Nonetheless, the variable is still skewed due to a majority of ‘0’ responses and a tail of a much smaller percentage of students reporting several victimizations. This violates the assumption of a normally distributed, continuous dependent variable in hierarchical linear modeling and necessitated the use of hierarchical over-dispersed Poisson modeling instead (Raudenbusch et al. 2011; Peguero and Williams 2011).

The outcome *putdowns* is an ordinal variable and violates the assumption of a continuous dependent variable. Thus, to estimate multilevel influences on being put down, multilevel ordinal logistic modeling was employed. This technique estimates the cumulative probabilities of observing a response to one of the ordinal categories in question while still parsing out the effects of the two different levels of analysis simultaneously (Hedeker and Gibbons 1994; Hedeker 2007). For the purposes of this study, the technique allowed for the estimation of the log-odds of strongly agreeing that one felt put down often in class.

The third and final dependent variable, *literal bullying*, is binary and also violates the assumption of a continuous dependent variable. When analyzing a binary variable in multilevel modeling, hierarchical logistic modeling is appropriate (Raudenbusch and Bryk 2002; Roscigno, Tomaskovic-Devey, and Crowley 2006) and thus was employed for this final analysis. The logit transformation of this dependent variable produced log-odds coefficients that indicated the probability of a student responding that he or she was bullied at least once in the past semester. Analyses of each bullying measure were performed with the HLM program, version 7 (Raudenbusch et al. 2011). Individual-level and school-level sampling weights were applied to all analyses to account for the unequal probability of selection in the ELS sampling design. Missing data were replaced through multiple imputation analyses which used existing data to create prediction equations to estimate the values of all missing responses (Allison 2002<sup>2</sup>).

## **RESULTS**

To provide an initial examination of gender differences in bullying victimization, individual-level analyses disaggregated by gender were conducted. For each analysis of the three different bullying outcomes, individual characteristics were controlled for in model 1 while model two added the effect of academic attitudes, effort, and achievement. Table 3.3 presents each analysis and overall indicates that time spent on homework and GPA are better predictors of increased bullying victimization (reported in fall semester, 10<sup>th</sup> grade) for male students compared to female students. For example, both hours spent on homework and GPA predicted increased log odds of perceiving bullying incidents for male students while only hours of

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<sup>2</sup> Five datasets free of missing data were created through this process. The HLM program allowed for these datasets to be analyzed simultaneously and produced the average coefficients and standard errors after the analysis of each data set. Thus, the estimation and pooling of results from five separate datasets created reliable standard errors and parameter estimates (Allison 2002).

Table 3.3: Individual Level Gender Differences in Bullying Victimization

Model	Bullying Incidents <sup>a</sup>				Putdowns <sup>b</sup>				Literal Bullying <sup>c</sup>			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Asian	-.038 (.044)	-.049 (.044)	-.300*** (.063)	-.294*** (.063)	.031 (.086)	.051 (.087)	.002 (.086)	.018 (.087)	-.047 (.109)	-.084 (.110)	-.472*** (.121)	-.470*** (.122)
Black	-.418*** (.044)	-.346*** (.046)	-.145** (.049)	-.157** (.051)	-.461*** (.079)	-.419*** (.081)	-.480*** (.080)	-.465*** (.083)	-.895*** (.126)	-.809*** (.128)	-.722*** (.113)	-.701*** (.117)
Hispanic	-.227*** (.039)	-.190*** (.040)	-.305*** (.049)	-.321*** (.050)	-.118 (.076)	-.096 (.078)	-.220** (.077)	-.211** (.078)	-.425*** (.104)	-.378*** (.105)	-.595*** (.104)	-.586*** (.105)
Multiracial	.123* (.052)	.127* (.052)	.106 (.066)	.099 (.066)	.064 (.121)	-.055 (.121)	.070 (.122)	.067 (.122)	.025 (.144)	.028 (.144)	-.024 (.144)	-.022 (.144)
SES	.102*** (.019)	.070*** (.019)	-.133*** (.023)	-.121*** (.024)	-.045 (.037)	-.052 (.039)	-.115** (.036)	-.107** (.037)	.140** (.049)	.902 (.050)	-.055 (.047)	-.056 (.048)
Disability	.149*** (.043)	.187*** (.043)	.491*** (.059)	.483*** (.059)	.304** (.097)	.312*** (.098)	.761*** (.133)	.754*** (.133)	.480*** (.142)	.544*** (.113)	.710*** (.140)	.712*** (.141)
Sports	-.107*** (.026)	-.124*** (.026)	-.081* (.033)	-.072* (.033)	-.180** (.052)	-.172** (.052)	-.130* (.052)	-.121* (.052)	-.253*** (.067)	-.286*** (.068)	-.178** (.067)	-.176** (.067)
College Prep	.018 (.027)	-.002 (.027)	-.107** (.033)	-.092** (.034)	-.049 (.053)	-.034 (.054)	-.192*** (.052)	-.168*** (.054)	.101 (.069)	.050 (.071)	.004 (.068)	.012 (.070)
Misbehavior	.262*** (.008)	.274*** (.008)	.295*** (.010)	.284*** (.012)	-.035 (.018)	.028 (.020)	.062** (.022)	.044 (.023)	.118*** (.023)	.148*** (.024)	.205*** (.026)	.199*** (.028)
<i>Academics</i>												
Attitude		-.068*** (.017)		-.017 (.025)		-.100** (.037)		-.082 (.043)		-.045 (.047)		-.055 (.053)
Homework		.093*** (.017)		.048* (.020)		.070* (.031)		.001 (.032)		.129** (.040)		.038 (.040)
GPA		.102*** (.020)		-.074** (.025)		.004 (.038)		-.022 (.039)		.164** (.051)		-.006 (.051)

a = poisson regression; b=ordered logistic regression; c=ordinal regression; N (males) = 6081; N (females) = 6331; Source: ELS, NCES

homework had the same effect for female students. Converted to odds ratios, the coefficients indicated that a one unit increase in hours spent on homework and GPA increased the expected number of reported bullying victimizations by 10% and 11% respectively. Further, an increase in GPA predicted an expected decrease in perceiving bullying incidents for female students. The effect of homework was also the only case where an academic variable predicted increased reported victimization for female students.

When the type of victimization being predicted was limited to only the response of specifically being “bullied or picked on”, gender differences in victimization became even more evident. After controlling for individual characteristics, all three academic variables were not significant for female students. However, for male students, homework increased the likelihood of reporting being bullied or picked on by 14% while GPA increased the likelihood by 18%. Also among male students, homework increased the likelihood of strongly agreeing that one felt put down by others in class by 7%. Overall these results indicate some support for Hypotheses 2 and 3 which suggested that homework and GPA would be two factors to increase bullying victimization for male students. On the other hand, academic attitudes supporting the importance of getting good grades only predicted negative or non-significant effects for male students, contradicting Hypothesis 1.

Still, these results can only be viewed as preliminary when remembering that school-level effects were not considered in these models. The next set of analyses (displayed in Table 3.4) using variations of Hierarchical Linear Modeling included those effects for a more thorough test of academic predictors’ effect on male students’ reported bullying victimization. The HLM results for males’ victimization based on academic effort and achievement remained consistent with the individual-level results. Table 3.4 reports the analysis of bullying incidents across the



Table 3.4: Multilevel Effects and Standard Errors for Bullying Incidents

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 3</u>	<u>Model 4</u>
<i>Individual Characteristics</i>				
Male	.281*** (.020)	.282*** (.020)	.286*** (.020)	-.381*** (.010)
Asian	-.140* (.068)	-.098 (.068)	-.107 (.068)	-.105 (.068)
Black	-.251*** (.042)	-.213*** (.043)	-.229*** (.043)	-.239*** (.043)
Hispanic	-.224*** (.039)	-.194*** (.040)	-.206*** (.040)	-.209*** (.040)
Multiracial	.010* (.042)	.110** (.042)	.090* (.042)	.087* (.042)
SES	-.007 (.046)	.014 (.017)	.013 (.017)	.013 (.017)
Disability	.200*** (.032)	.191*** (.032)	.186*** (.032)	.188*** (.032)
Sports	-.140*** (.020)	-.147*** (.020)	-.148*** (.020)	-.142*** (.020)
College Prep	-.070*** (.021)	-.062** (.021)	-.070*** (.022)	-.069*** (.022)
Misbehavior	.283*** (.006)	.283*** (.006)	.286*** (.007)	.286*** (.007)
<i>School Characteristics</i>				
Urban		-.138** (.049)	-.137** (.050)	-.141** (.049)
Rural		.142*** (.042)	.148*** (.042)	.152*** (.042)
Size		-.020 (.023)	-.016 (.023)	-.012 (.023)
% Free Lunch		.002 (.009)	.002 (.009)	.002 (.009)
% College Prep		-.001* (.001)	-.001* (.001)	-.001* (.001)
Bullying Problems		.052*** (.015)	.052*** (.015)	.050*** (.015)
<i>Academic Variables</i>				
Attitude			.004 (.013)	-.004 (.022)
Homework			.071*** (.010)	.046** (.018)

Table 3.4 continued

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 3</u>	<u>Model 4</u>
<i>Academic Variables</i>				
GPA			-.012 (.013)	-.125*** (.020)
<i>Interaction Terms</i>				
Male*Attitude				.025 (.026)
Male*Homework				.039* (.021)
Male*GPA				.181*** (.024)
Variance Component	.125***	.111***	.112***	.111***

Note: Log-Odds coefficients (standard errors)

\*\*\*p <.001, \*\*p <.01, \*p <.05

Source: ELS, NCES

full sample. Models 1 and 2 indicate that many individual and school characteristics were significant predictors of variation in perceived bullying victimizations that included being threatened with physical harm, being hit, having money or possessions forcefully taken, or simply being bullied. At the individual level, male students reported more of these victimizations relative to female students while African American and Hispanic students reported fewer victimizations relative to white students. Characteristics such as multiraciality and having a disability made students more prone to reporting victimizations while being in a college-prep track slightly decreased reported victimization. Misbehavior also predicted an increase in reported victimizations. At the school level, relative to suburban schools, students in urban schools reported fewer victimizations while students in rural schools reported more. The

effect of attending a school where the principal noticed high levels of bullying also accounted for increased chances of reported victimization.

Despite controlling for those numerous factors, academic predictors which were at the heart of this study's research interests and hypotheses had significant influences on victimization as well. Models 3 and 4 indicate that for the whole sample, having a high GPA made one less likely to experience bullying victimizations. However, when focusing only on the effect of being male with a high GPA, the effect was that students were 20% more likely to experience those victimizations. Hours spent on homework predicted increased victimization across the whole sample, although the effect of being male multiplied by hours spent on homework also predicted a slight increase in victimization. Adding the interaction terms in Model 4 also explained away the initial effect of male students being more likely to report victimizations relative to female students. Once the combination of being male and having intellectual characteristics was taken into account, male students were actually *less likely* to report victimizations.

Table 3.5 explores the possibility that the previous findings for male students were due to the physical nature of the bullying victimizations listed on the bullying incidents scale. The analysis of simply being singled out in school shows that possibility was initially confirmed after finding that there was not a significant effect on feeling put down for male students. Thus, feeling put down often in class may be a more gender-neutral measure of feeling stigmatized or bullied. Still, controls for individual and school characteristics in Models 1 and 2 predicted variation in feeling put down in the same directions as the previous analysis. Further, the effect of being male multiplied by hours of homework predicted a 10% increase in feeling put down by other students. Table 3.6 reports the final analysis and a strict test of the study's three

Table 3.5: Multilevel Ordered Logistic Analysis of Putdowns

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 3</u>	<u>Model 4</u>
Intercept	-1.167***	-1.125***	-1.129***	-1.130***
<i>Individual Characteristics</i>				
Male	.012 (.037)	.012 (.037)	-.004 (.037)	-.319 (.131)
Asian	.036 (.115)	.090 (.115)	.129 (.116)	.128 (.116)
Black	-.462*** (.070)	-.430*** (.072)	-.435*** (.073)	-.439*** (.073)
Hispanic	-.242*** (.067)	-.191*** (.069)	-.192** (.069)	-.193** (.069)
Multiracial	.165 (.090)	.187* (.090)	.182* (.090)	.183* (.090)
SES	-.107*** (.029)	-.070* (.030)	-.054 (.030)	-.055 (.030)
Disability	.525*** (.071)	.512*** (.071)	.482*** (.071)	.483*** (.071)
Sports	-.167*** (.038)	-.174*** (.038)	-.159*** (.038)	-.157*** (.038)
College Prep	-.148*** (.038)	-.135*** (.039)	-.104** (.040)	-.102* (.040)
Misbehavior	.068*** (.014)	.069*** (.014)	.053*** (.015)	.052*** (.015)
<i>School Characteristics</i>				
Urban		.003 (.069)	.013 (.069)	.010 (.069)
Rural		.271*** (.060)	.272*** (.060)	.217*** (.060)
Size		-.017 (.032)	-.017 (.033)	-.016 (.033)
% Free Lunch		.021 (.013)	.022 (.013)	.021 (.013)
% College Prep		.000 (.001)	.000 (.001)	.000 (.001)
Bullying Problems		.058** (.022)	.059** (.022)	.059** (.022)
<i>Academic Variables</i>				
Attitude			-.073** (.027)	-.068 (.040)

Table 3.5 continued

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 3</u>	<u>Model 4</u>
<i>Academic Variables</i>				
Homework			.067*** (.020)	.017 (.029)
GPA			-.077** (.025)	-.103** (.035)
<i>Interaction Terms</i>				
Male*Attitude				-.005 (.051)
Male*Homework				.092* (.040)
Male*GPA				.048 (.045)
Threshold 2	2.837***	2.845***	2.854***	2.586***
Threshold 3	4.557***	4.593***	4.604***	4.606**
Variance Component	.178***	.160***	.160***	.159***

Note: Log-Odds coefficients (standard errors)

\*\*\*p <.001, \*\*p <.01, \*p <.05

Source: ELS, NCES

hypotheses. It only examines the specific likelihood of students reporting that they were “bullied” even though bullying victimization can take many forms (Olweus 1993; 2001). This measure also excluded forms of bullying related to physical and property victimization. The results indicate that male students were less likely to report being “bullied or picked on” relative to female students. With the exception of school size predicting decreased chances for victimization, the effects of other individual and school control variables were consistent with the previous two analyses. When the interaction terms were added to Model 4, further support

Table 3.6: Multilevel Logistic Modeling Analysis of Literal Bullying

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 3</u>	<u>Model 4</u>
<i>Individual Characteristics</i>				
Male	-.119** (.046)	-.117*** (.046)	-.101* (.046)	-1.237*** (.230)
Asian	-.345* (.150)	-.233 (.150)	-.254 (.151)	-.257 (.151)
Black	-.867*** (.100)	-.753*** (.102)	-.775*** (.103)	-.788*** (.104)
Hispanic	-.589*** (.088)	-.505*** (.090)	-.522*** (.090)	-.525*** (.090)
Multiracial	-.095 (.107)	-.062 (.108)	-.081 (.108)	-.086 (.108)
SES	-.043 (.036)	.014 (.038)	.009 (.038)	.010 (.038)
Disability	.424*** (.080)	.407*** (.081)	.402*** (.082)	.406*** (.082)
Sports	-.216*** (.047)	-.242*** (.047)	-.251*** (.047)	-.248*** (.047)
College Prep	-.057 (.048)	-.029 (.048)	-.055 (.049)	-.054 (.049)
Misbehavior	.202*** (.017)	.203*** (.017)	.216*** (.018)	.217*** (.018)
<i>School Characteristics</i>				
Urban		-.140 (.082)	-.145 (.083)	-.153 (.083)
Rural		.152* (.068)	.162* (.068)	.165* (.068)
Size		-.109** (.038)	-.104** (.038)	-.100** (.038)
% Free Lunch		-.007 (.015)	-.008 (.015)	-.009 (.015)
% College Prep		-.002* (.001)	-.002* (.001)	-.002* (.001)
Bullying Problems		.071** (.025)	.071** (.025)	.070** (.025)
<i>Academic Variables</i>				
Attitude			.044 (.033)	-.011 (.048)
Homework			.110*** (.024)	.050 (.036)

Table 3.6 continued

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 3</u>	<u>Model 4</u>
<i>Academic Variables</i>				
GPA			-.008 (.030)	-.094* (.043)
<i>Interaction Terms</i>				
Male*Attitude				.116 (.061)
Male*Homework				.113* (.048)
Male*GPA				.179*** (.056)
Intercept	-1.383***	-1.486***	-.1489***	-1.492***

Note: Log-Odds coefficients (standard errors)

\*\*\*p <.001, \*\*p <.01, \*p <.05

Source: ELS, NCES

for the importance of academic effort and achievement was found nonetheless. The effect of being male multiplied by hours spent on homework predicted a 12% increase in reported victimization while the effect of being male multiplied by one's GPA predicted a 20% increase in reported victimization. This was the case even though the effect of GPA was negative when applied to the entire sample. Finally, adding the interaction terms in the final model again had a strong impact on male students' overall chances for victimization. When the combination of being male and having intellectual characteristics was added to the equation, the chances of all male students literally reporting that they were bullied decreased by 61%. This suggests that above and beyond individual demographics and school context, academic effort and achievement are responsible for a significant portion of male students' bullying victimization.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study proceeded from the premise that intellectualism may be devalued among students in Western school systems. Anecdotal evidence pointed out how male students in particular seemed to be subject to stigmatization and bullying if they were perceived as too intellectual and lacking in masculinity (Willis 1977; Kinney 1993; MacLeod 1995; Epstein 1998; Renold 2001; 2004; Morris 2008; 2012). To examine this possibility, a nationally representative sample of U.S. high school sophomores was analyzed to examine the extent to which intellectualism as measured by pro-academic attitudes as well as academic effort and achievement predicted the risk of reported bullying victimization. The first analyses were disaggregated by gender in order to focus on gender differences in the relationship between intellectualism and bullying victimization. For a more thorough multilevel analysis, those groups were aggregated into one sample in order to ensure the clustering of students within schools; this made accounting for school-level influences on bullying victimization possible (Raudenbusch and Bryk 2002). Results of both individual-level and multilevel analyses indicated that after accounting for other factors related to bullying victimization, hours spent on homework as well as GPA tended to be reliable predictors of increased chances of perceived bullying victimization for male students.

At the individual level, after controlling for individual demographics and activities such as athletics, participating in a college-prep curriculum and misbehavior, hours spent on homework predicted increased male students' bullying victimization as measured by all three of the study's dependent variables. These included a scale of the number of reported victimization events, victimization measured as feeling put down by other students, and victimization literally defined as bullying by the respondent. In the multilevel models that included controls for



school-level characteristics, those results as measured by the effect of an interaction term for being male multiplied by hours of homework remained consistent. Concerning academic achievement as measured by students' GPA in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, both the individual-level and multilevel analyses indicated that increases in GPA predicted increases in bullying victimization as measured by the number of victimization events as well as victimization specifically defined as bullying. In contrast to effort and achievement, a pro-academic attitude as measured by agreement with the importance of good grades did not increase male (or female) students' chances of reporting bullying victimization across all analyses.

The distinction between attitudes and actions echoes Epstein's (1998) interpretation that doing well in school on its own was not viewed as a sign of femininity; only the display of one's efforts and successes were. The measure of hours spent on homework in this study included hours spent on homework at home and in school which suggests that at least some of that work would have been observed by peers. Similar to the choice to stay inside and do homework rather than going outside to play sports that Renold (2004) observed, taking opportunities to do homework in school instead of socializing may be noticed by other students. Observations of students' peer cultures also indicate that students have a sense of how much effort their peers exert towards academic achievement outside of school as well (Kinney 1993; Morris 2008). The preoccupation with peers' academic effort and achievement that may identify someone as a nerd seems to be common due to the significance that social status plays in high schools (Milner 2004). In addition, when considering that dedication to turning in assignments and otherwise being prepared for class generally results in improved academic performance, it is reasonable to expect that students in the schools sampled by ELS would have some awareness of their peers' academic effort. Further, as active interpreters of their social environments, cues to academic

achievement beyond classroom performance such as honor roll lists and other academic awards would give students a reasonable amount of information to have a general awareness of which students have high GPAs. Evidence that some students chose to purposely underachieve to avoid bullying and stigmatization based on that awareness has been documented several times as well (Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Epstein 1998; Brown 1990 Kinney 1993; Morris 2008). Thus, despite society's emphasis on the importance of education, academic effort and achievement may serve as "stigma symbols" (Goffman 1963) that put students at risk for being singled out as was shown in the support for Hypotheses 2 and 3.

In contrast, students' attitudes towards the importance of education may be easier to mask. Several ethnographic studies indicate that students are able to selectively express or withhold their beliefs about the importance of education and future aspirations based on whether they perceive themselves to be in a group receptive or resistant to the importance of academics (Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Horvat and Lewis 2003; Carter 2005). The ability to keep an attitude concealed from potential bullying perpetrators could help explain the lack of findings related to Hypothesis 1 which expected a positive relationship between agreeing that good grades are important and male students' bullying victimization.

Turning to other findings, the social status of 'athlete' in schools has been closely tied to popularity and perceptions of masculinity (Coleman 1961; Adler et al. 1992; Kinney 1993; Morris 2008) while a focus on academics has been tied to perceptions of femininity (Epstein 1998; Renold 2001; 2004; Morris 2008; 2012). In each of the analyses reported, being a varsity athlete reduced male students' chances for reporting bullying victimization. At the individual level, being a varsity athlete also reduced female students' reported victimization. Thus, female high school students in the U.S. may also garner status from participating in athletics. In

addition, accounting for male\*academic interactions influenced the initial coefficient capturing the likelihood of male bullying victimization in reference to females' victimization. For the number of victimizations reported as well as specifically reporting that one was bullied, accounting for the interactions decreased the likelihood of male victimization. In other words, these findings show that controlling for the effect of being male and academically oriented do help to explain differences in male students' bullying victimization compared to female students' victimization. It suggests that the perceived femininity of academics is a concern that male students must negotiate while in school.

Other findings of note include the fact that several school-level factors influenced students' chances of bullying victimization. For example, the nationally representative findings showed that for each type of bullying, attending a school in a rural area was associated with a higher risk of victimization in reference to suburban schools. This finding can add to the debate on whether rural isolation or urban disorder is a better predictor of bullying in schools (Nansel et al. 2001; Farmer et al. 2011). Principal's reports of bullying problems in school also seemed to be fairly accurate. This variable was also associated with increased risks of bullying across all three analyses. Thus, accounting for these and other school-level factors through multilevel modeling as suggested by previous bullying research (Ma 2001; Birkett et al. 2009; Peguero and Williams 2011) proved to be a useful strategy. Finally, findings from individual-level control variables like the dummy variables for having a disability and being multiracial suggest that students are indeed stigmatized for these qualities across the country. Future research should examine those factors in more detail in efforts to mitigate bullying victimization based on those social statuses.

Despite these findings there are still shortcomings to be noted and improvements to be made in future research. For example, LGBT status and obesity were not measured by ELS; thus they were not controlled for in this study despite previous research suggesting their association with bullying victimization (Janssen et al. 2004; Halpern et al. 2005; Birkett et al. 2009; Robinson and Espelage 2011). ELS also did not control for characteristics of students' social networks or students' structural position in those networks which has been found to be related to the risk of bullying victimization (Faris and Felmlee 2011). Further, this study's findings refer to a sample of 10<sup>th</sup> graders who are at a stage in school where bullying behavior tends to be in decline as high school social statuses are solidified and competition over status decreases (Pellegrini and Bartini 2000; Milner 2004). Therefore this study may only be capturing the tail-end of students' bullying victimization experiences in school. Studies of younger students and students who have made a more recent transition from one school to another could be initiated under a similar framework as this study. Measures of bullying victimization were self-reported which also brings up the possibility that victimization may have been under or over-reported.

As social media continues to flourish in society, future bullying research should treat cyber-bullying victimization as an outcome as well. Conducted in 2002, the ELS study surveyed students who attended high school before the explosion of social media that occurred soon thereafter. Bullying can also include relational bullying such as spreading rumors and exclusion from social groups (Olweus 2001; Jordan and Austin 2012) however this type of bullying was not examined either. Previous bullying research notes that female students are more likely to be victims of relational bullying (Hoover et al. 1992; Whitney and Smith 1993; Jeffrey et al. 2001)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> There are exceptions of course. Relational aggression is not limited exclusively to female perpetrators and victims (Swearer 2008). Further, female students have been subject to physical and property victimization as well (Wilcox Tillyer, and Fisher 2009).

which points out that this study was much more focused on male students' bullying victimization compared to female students. Although that was the primary focus of the study, future bullying research should examine non-academic factors associated with female students' bullying victimization and the specific forms that victimization may take. Finally, studies on the relationship between academics and bullying victimization should examine the perspective of the bully to provide a fuller picture of the interactional process of bullying.

## **CONCLUSION**

Despite the limitations, the findings presented here have made several contributions to the literature on bullying and students' treatment of academically oriented students within the school context. For example, by building from the theoretical framework of ethnographies that linked academics to femininity and by pointing out the social consequences for male students who pursue academic success (Epstein 1998; Renold 2001; 2004; Morris 2008; 2012), this quantitative, national scale study complimented those previous works by examining the bullying of intellectual male students on a much broader scale. By employing three different measures of bullying victimization in multilevel analyses, a more thorough test was also provided. The findings from the tests showed that for male students, academic effort and achievement are sanctioned and stigmatized through bullying. In contrast, there is very little to suggest that female students are sanctioned for the same reasons to the same extent. As Epstein (1998), Renold (2001; 2004), and Morris (2008) have suggested, these findings may be related to the incompatibility between conventional notions of masculinity and academics. Female students are typically socialized to be passive and obedient to authority; the findings in this study showed that as measured by bullying related to academic effort and achievement, there is less incompatibility between intellectualism and how female students are expected to behave by their

peers. On the other hand, intellectualism fails to conform to the disruptiveness and virility that males are socialized to display (Mickelson 1989). This study did not directly measure masculinity however future research on gender differences in bullying victimization should consider the possibility.

Regardless of whether a mechanism concerning masculinity and the bullying of intellectual students is present, the findings in this study still suggest serious implications for the U.S. education system. For example, if academic effort and achievement result in male students being more likely to be bullied, it suggests that there is a lack of prestige associated with academics at least for male students. When considering that male students lag behind female students in grades, test scores, and educational attainment (Buchmann, DiPrete, and McDaniel 2008) the urgency of the issue is brought into focus. Bullying victimization already impedes students' academic achievement, but if bullying and stigmatization are specifically directed at intellectualism, it could deter male students from future educational aspirations and exacerbate those gaps. Ceasing the behavior that causes one to be stigmatized would be consistent with Goffman's (1963) predictions of how stigmatized individuals adapt to their victimization. As has been mentioned several times, students bully each other in a struggle for social status in adolescence (Pellegrini and Bartini 2000; Milner 2004); if the highest academic achievers are associated with being a devalued nerd or geek instead of a highly respected person, the bullying of academically oriented students will likely continue.

In other words, the policy implications of these findings suggest that in a broad sense and within individual schools, a direct focus should be placed on elevating the social status of academically oriented individuals. It is true that such individuals will be rewarded with good grades, awards, scholarships, and the opportunity to earn high incomes as an adult, but some

students may be discouraged from pursuing the same path when social status (including avoiding bullying and other forms of stigmatization) is understandably a significant priority for many adolescent students. This is another aspect of schools' ecologies that can be addressed in bullying prevention programs (see Swearer et al. 2010). Milner (2004) also points out that providing students with more autonomy may decrease the extent to which status is contested for via putting down one's peers. In other words, softening the rigidity of the U.S. education system may also soften the need for students to victimize each other. On the other hand, the onus does not always have to fall on schools and educators. Students are agents as well and it is clear that most students do understand the importance of education. Thus, students can be directly involved in bullying prevention efforts aimed at elevating the status of successful students.

Beyond these calls to "change the culture", current bullying prevention programs in schools should be sustained as well. Without continued efforts to protect potentially vulnerable students from bullying, academically oriented students will continue to be at risk for many of the well-documented psychological and physiological consequences of bullying. Obviously, such outcomes are not desirable for any students. Still, the fact that high effort and high achieving students are stigmatized, devalued, and subjected to those risks sends a message which conflicts with educators', parents', and policymakers' stance on the importance of education in our society. Thus, the topic merits continued attention and research among academics, educators, and policymakers.

In the next chapter, the focus changes from gender differences in bullying victimization to differences in victimization between Asian, African American, Latino, and White students. Nonetheless, gender, socioeconomic status, and other axes of educational inequality are controlled for. Further, the importance of accounting for potential school-level influences on

bullying victimization is also addressed. Like this chapter, previous literature that motivates the approach to focus on differences between groups is reviewed. In contrast to this chapter, disaggregating between several groups necessitated a slightly different analytic strategy which will also be discussed. The findings and their implications are discussed as well.



## **CHAPTER 4: COMPARISONS OF BULLYING VICTIMIZATION BY RACE: THE EFFECTS OF ACADEMICS AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Bullying encompasses a range of victimizations including being attacked verbally, physically, and socially by peers (Olweus 2001). Verbal attacks include being called names or otherwise mocked by peers, physical bullying involves being hit or having one's property stolen or destroyed, and bullying at the hands of several peers at once includes being the subject of negative rumors and / or social isolation. In other words, far from students simply "picking on" each other, bullying is a multi-faceted phenomenon with serious consequences. For example, victims of bullying tend to experience increased symptoms of depression and anxiety, and decreased self-esteem (Jordan and Austin 2012). Academic-related consequences of bullying include problems such as poor academic achievement (Arsenault et al. 2006; Beran, Hughes, and Lupart 2008; Nakamoto and Schwartz 2010; Juvonen 2011), decreased classroom participation (Ladd, Harold-Brown, and Reiser 2008), negative evaluations from teachers (Juvonen, Wang, and Espinoza 2011), detachment from school (Wei and Williams 2004; Popp and Peguero 2011), and academic withdrawal (Smith et al. 2004). The fear of being victimized in the future hampers concentration in school (Addington and Yablon 2011) which provides a mechanism for the relationship between victimization and lower grades (Arsenault et al. 2006; Beran, Hughes, and Lupart 2008).

Aside from academic consequences, there is also a tradition of documenting how academic attitudes, effort, and achievement are related to various forms of peer sanctioning. Many of these studies have focused on African American students and the extent to which students may be victimized for working hard and doing well in school. For example, John Ogbu

and colleagues described a collective identity among African American students that rejected the importance of academic work and striving for good grades (Ogbu 1978; 1987; Fordham and Ogbu 1986). Emerging from their observations was the notion that African American students attending segregated, impoverished schools developed these attitudes in collective defiance against the dominant social structure which privileges whiteness. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) even noted that peer groups reinforced the importance of this stance through name calling and physical victimization of others who displayed academic effort and striving. The authors speculated that these attitudes and behaviors may contribute to the black-white gap in academic achievement (see Mickelson 1990; Downey 2008 for a discussion on the gap) however the results of testing that hypothesis through quantitative analyses have been mixed (Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey 1998; Farkas, Lleras and MacZuga 2002; Downey and Ainsworth-Darnell 2002).

Both Ogbu (2004) and Fordham (2008) critiqued this work for over-simplifying their theoretical framework; they pointed out that sanctioning African American peers who worked hard at school was only one strategy for coping with job ceilings they were likely to face in adulthood. Further, the practice does not represent a monolithic “culture” opposed to education even within low income, segregated schools. The most recent quantitative study related to this literature found that for a national sample of African American students, there were no significant causal pathways between academic achievement, bullying sanctions, and later academic disengagement or decreased achievement (Wildhagen 2011). In other words, when each aspect of the oppositional culture model was included in a comprehensive analysis, its predictions did not hold up. In terms of studying the relationship between academic achievement and bullying victimization, Wildhagen (2011) also found that white students experienced various

sanctions based on their academic efforts and achievements. Attitudes and effort were not addressed in that study but their potential effects will be addressed into the current study.

Building from Wildhagen (2011) nonetheless, the present study suggests that peer-directed bullying serves as a sanction against academic attitudes, effort, and achievement for many students in U.S. high schools regardless of their race or ethnicity. Further, in addition to students' academic pursuits, the study will incorporate the effect of students' extra-curricular activities on their chances of bullying victimization. Participation in those activities may be related to better opportunities to develop friendships and popularity that may shield students from bullying victimization (Kinney 1993). After accounting for previous research on race, ethnicity, and bullying victimization, this approach seeks to develop a more comprehensive examination of students' academic and extra-curricular activities in school as they relate to their risk of being bullied. Implications for the relationship between those activities and bullying victimization are addressed in the discussion section.

## **RACE, ETHNICITY, AND BULLYING VICTIMIZATION**

Much of the research on minority students and bullying victimization is tied to students' reports of being stigmatized / bullied in relation to various racial stereotypes. Such stereotypes consist of notions that African American students have inferior intellectual capabilities (Steele 1997; Kao 2000) but are naturally gifted in athletics (Peguero, Popp, and Koo 2011), that Latino students are illegal aliens or destined for manual labor (Kao 2000; Peguero 2012), and that all Asian students are naturally gifted at mathematics and science (Chow and Feagin 2008; Lee 2009). Testing the extent to which findings from those case studies can explain larger trends in students' educational experiences has shed light on the relationship between academic

achievement and bullying. For example, in an analysis of ELS data, Peguero and Williams (2011) found that when African American students have high standardized test scores, they are more likely to be bullied. This suggests the possibility that when African American students refute the “lack of intelligence” stereotype, they may be subject to bullying for doing so. However, the same pattern was found for Asian American students. Thus, signs of intelligence were connected to bullying victimization regardless of whether the groups’ stereotype was associated with intelligence or lack of intelligence.

Like Wildhagen’s (2011) finding related to white students’ victimization, Asian students’ victimization is another example of an academically privileged group being negatively evaluated as a result of a positive academic quality. Tyson, Darity, and Castellino (2005) documented similar instances where white high achieving students were sanctioned because they were perceived as over-achievers, snobbish and out to make other students look bad. In a similar context, (Morris 2008) noted that high school students looked down on and questioned the masculinity of male high achievers. Tyson et al. (2005) also found that there were many instances of African American students who reported no instances of being picked on or bullied on account of their academic achievement. These findings are reminiscent of MacLeod’s (1995) work where a group of economically disadvantaged white males focused on toughness and bad behavior instead of school while a group of African American males strived for academic success despite economic barriers. Taken together, these ethnographic observations suggest that the bullying and stigmatization of intellectually oriented students could transcend racial categories. This leads to the study’s first hypothesis which states: *If a wider practice of bullying directed at intellectualism exists, we should expect measures of academic attitudes, effort, and*

*achievement to increase bullying victimization for Asian, African American, Latino and White students.*

Beyond focusing on racial stereotypes, other factors such as local school context influence students' chances of being the victim of bullying (Espelage and Swearer 2003). For example, factors related to school social disorder such as urbanicity, poverty, and lack of social control increase the risk of bullying victimization (Bradshaw et al. 2009; Goldweber et al. 2013). Peguero (2012) points out that racial segregation in urban areas help explain why African American and Latino students tend to be victims; students in those groups are more likely to attend schools with the aforementioned problems.

At the interactional level, Pellegrini and Bartini (2000) note that bullying often takes place due to the need to establish status hierarchies when students transition from one stage of school to another (middle school to high school for example). Rather than an instinctual need however, social scientists recognize that these behaviors are related to adolescence being a pivotal time for identity construction (Crosnoe 2000). In the socially ambiguous setting of a new school that lacks social organization among peers, students tend to employ various forms of aggression to establish dominance and higher social status over other students (Pellegrini and Bartini 2000).

This insight may help to further contextualize “oppositional cultures” and their treatment of academically oriented students (Ogbu 1987). For example, Carter (2005) points out that practices of stigmatizing African American peers for “acting white” were enacted for the purposes of delineating one’s identity and maintaining social status among peers. The goal of those stigmatizations may have had little to nothing to do with the importance of education and /

or achievement from the perspective of both the perpetrators and the victims. Although aggression or sanctioning motivated by a students' involuntary minority status may exist in some contexts, jockeying for social status may be more of a common experience for all students regardless of race or ethnicity. Further, the student "acting white" has been singled out in a similar way that the "nerd" has been singled out.

From a more macro perspective on bullying and peer status struggles, in an extensive study of U.S. high schools Milner (2004) argued that the school system in general promotes jockeying for status (as opposed to social-psychological mechanisms). With each aspect of students' daily schooling highly regulated, social hierarchies remain one aspect of the school environment that students have ownership of according to Milner. Like many other previously cited studies, he found that bullying or picking on students labeled as "nerds" was a common form of elevating one's status at the expense of the victim's status. To reiterate, putting a fellow student down for "acting white" (Fordham and Ogbu 1986) may be one way to elevate oneself in the social hierarchy, but it is not necessarily the only situation where a student may be put down for their academic pursuits.

Incidentally, the status of being a good student does not automatically or permanently relegate one to a low status in school. For example, Kinney (1993) found that joining extra-curricular activities such as a school newspaper or theater club provided increased social support that shielded students previously labeled as nerds from bullying victimization. In addition to activities, students are able to select friends that share their academic interests as another form of support against sanctions or bullying (Horvat and Lewis 2003; Carter 2005). Thus, even if there are students in school who would target "nerds" or otherwise good students, a support network of friends may make a student a more difficult target. Similar social support against racialized

stereotypes that was fostered through friend groups was described by Tatum (1997). Although Horvat and Lewis (2003) as well as Carter (2005) only focused on African American students, they make an important contribution in reminding us that students are agents that can seek out protection against bullying and manage the impressions that other students have of them.

A similar buffer against being picked on or otherwise bullied can be found in the well-documented significance of participation in interscholastic sports. Regardless of academic pursuits, students who are prominent athletes tend to have high popularity and avoid being stigmatized or bullied (Coleman 1961; Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Eder and Kinney 1995). In their study of racial stereotypes and bullying victimization, Peguero and Williams (2011) also found that Asian and Latino students who participated in interscholastic sports were more likely to be bullied; because these groups are not stereotypically viewed as athletic, this served as another example of broken racial stereotypes resulting in bullying victimization. Thus, beyond indicators of students' intellectualism, students' out-of-classroom activities and peer support structures may serve as important mediators of bullying victimization. This consideration leads to the study's second hypothesis: *Non-academic variables related to students' social status and ability to develop groups of social support should be related to decreased likelihood of bullying victimization.*

## **THE PRESENT STUDY**

While many studies have tested the extent to which African American students have been stigmatized or bullied for being good students, the point of the current study is to focus on several different racial and ethnic groups to examine the extent to which bullying victimization related to intellectualism transcends the boundaries of race and ethnicity. Another concern is

that beyond macro-level effects such as characteristics of students' schools, how are other (non-academic) aspects of students' day to day lives such as social groups and extra-curricular activities related to their risk of bullying victimization? This study adds to research on race, ethnicity, and bullying victimization by taking both academic achievement and non-academic activities into account.

In order to do so, data collected for the Education Longitudinal Study (ELS) of 2002 were analyzed. All analyses were conducted in a three-model structure with bullying victimization as the dependent variable. Control variables were entered into the first model while measures of academic attitudes, effort and achievement were added to the second model. Finally, participation in interscholastic sports, and participation in other extra-curricular activities were added to the third model. This approach was first applied to the entire sample; then, separate analyses were conducted for African American, Asian, Latino, and White students in order to make comparisons between groups.

When considering that the comparisons between the four groups were the primary interest in this study, fixed effects modeling was chosen to account for school-level effects as opposed to multilevel modeling. Disaggregating the sample created groups that were too small to be analyzed through multilevel modeling. In each group, too few students were nested within schools to enable the necessary data structure as described by Raudenbusch and Bryk (2002). However, fixed effects modeling still allowed school-level effects to be eliminated from the regression equations, allowing for the focus on predictors of bullying victimization related to students' intellectual, social, and extra-curricular pursuits.



## **METHODS**

### **Data and Sample**

The ELS base-year questionnaire was chosen as the data source for this study. The questionnaire was administered during students' sophomore year in high school. Data collection took place in 2002 after the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) selected a sample of 750 schools from across the United States. From each school, a sample of students was selected to participate. During the base-year ELS data collection, students were asked questions referring to their individual characteristics, school activities, experiences of being bullied, and several measures of academic attitudes, effort, and achievement which made the data ideal for examining racial and ethnic variation in the connections between bullying victimization and academic attitudes, effort, achievement, friend support, and extra-curricular activities.

Students who identified themselves as Black / African American, Asian / Pacific Islander, Hispanic / Latino/a, or White were included in the final sample. Multiracial and Native American students were not included due to considerations of small sample sizes. This resulted in a total sample size of 13,403. Students without valid sampling weights and / or students with missing data related to bullying victimization were also excluded due to the need to account for the stratified design of the sampling frame.

### **Bullying Victimization**

To take into account the various ways students may perceive bullying victimization, a composite measure was created from responses to four survey items concerning in-school victimization. These items referred to the following events: being threatened with physical harm, being hit, having money or other possessions forcefully taken, and being "bullied." This

measure accounted for a wide range of perceived victimizations encompassed under Olweus' (2001) definition of bullying. For each item, the student could report that an event happened never, once or twice, or more than twice during the first semester of their sophomore year. For each item, never was coded with a 0, once or twice was coded with a 1, and more than twice was coded with a 2. Aggregating the response to each item into one measure of bullying victimization resulted in a scale ranging from 0-8 ( $\alpha = .63$ )<sup>4</sup>.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities and Peer Support**

It was expected that extra-curricular activities and peer support would predict a decreased likelihood of bullying victimization and reduce the effect of intellectualism on victimization. Several measures were constructed to tap those non-academic resources of social status that students rely on. First, the measurement of social support was generated from an item asking the student how important various aspects of their schooling and social life were among their close friends. The specific item chosen was how important it was to those friends that the student “get good grades.” Responses were coded as 1 = “not important,” 2 = “somewhat important,” or 3 = “very important.” This measured the extent to which the student perceived that his or her friends would be supportive of academic endeavors which could have an insulating effect against other peers who may stigmatize or bully them for any signs of intellectualism (Lewis and Horvat 2003). Second, to account for the popularity that athletes tend to be given in high schools, status as an athlete was measured as a binary variable indicating that a student participated in at least

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<sup>4</sup> In terms of the two other dependent variables used in the previous analysis (putdowns and literal bullying), Stata does not support fixed effects multiple imputation analyses of dependent variables that are measured as ordinal or binary variables.

one interscholastic varsity sport<sup>5</sup> during the school year the survey was administered. Third and finally, to account for the increased chances for making friends and further insulation from potential bullying victimization that participating in extra-curricular activities may provide, a measure of the number of school-sponsored activities<sup>6</sup> that a student participated in was constructed. With 8 possible school-sponsored activities, the measure ranged from 0-8<sup>7</sup>.

### **Academic Attitude, Effort and Achievement**

To measure indicators of being intellectually focused, measures of academic attitudes, effort, and achievement were included in the analysis. Attitude was measured by students' responses to the survey item, "How important are good grades to you?" where students could respond "not important," "somewhat important," "important," or "very important." Responses were coded 1-4 where 1 indicated "not important." Effort was measured by combining students' reported number of hours per week spent on homework both in and out of school during the previous semester. Due to a positive skew, this variable was transformed with a log transformation. Academic achievement was measured by students' 9<sup>th</sup> grade GPA as indicated by official transcripts obtained by the NCES. GPA ranged from 0-4. In consideration of the importance of hours spent on homework and GPA in Chapter 3 on gender differences in bullying victimization, including the same academic predictors in this chapter will allow for comparisons to be made between the analysis focused on gender and the present analysis focused on race.

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<sup>5</sup> The sports students could indicate they participated in included baseball, softball, basketball, football, soccer, individual sports, other sports, or cheerleading / pompom / drill team.

<sup>6</sup> The activities could have included musical or theatrical activities, student government, honors societies, school yearbook / newspaper / magazines, hobby, academic, or service clubs.

<sup>7</sup> While there are fewer restrictions typically placed on how many out of school activities students can participate in, students are typically limited to one sport per athletic season (fall, winter, spring) in high school. Thus there was a wider range of possible activities compared to sports which led to activities being measured by count and sports being measured by 0,1.

## **Individual Characteristics and Control Variables**

Gender (male) and living in a single parent family were controlled for using binary variables. Disability status was also measured as a binary variable that indicated a student was a member of one or more federal disability categories and participated in an individualized education program at his or her school. ELS compiled the disability information based on reports from school personnel. Socioeconomic status (SES) was controlled for through a composite and weighted measure. As part of the base-year data collection, ELS surveyed students' parents / guardians and compiled information concerning their education, income, and occupational prestige. This information was linked to individual students to produce the composite measure of student SES. The measure was weighted to have a mean of 0. Finally, getting into physical fights at school, skipping school, and otherwise getting in trouble at school as reported by the student were controlled for to account for the correlation between misbehavior and bullying victimization. All three types of misbehavior were coded as either 0 = the event never happened, 1 = it happened once or twice, 2 = it happened more than twice. All three items were then combined into one index ranging from 0-6 to create the misbehavior variable ( $\alpha = .84$ ). In the aggregate analysis, racial and ethnic categories (Asian / Pacific Islander, Black / African American, Hispanic / Latino/a) were also controlled for. Means and standard deviations of all variables disaggregated by race and ethnicity can be found in Table 4.1.

## **Fixed Effects Analysis**

When bullying occurs in schools, the characteristics of those schools factor into the extent to which any student within the school may be victimized by bullying (Espelage and Swearer 2003). In other studies on bullying victimization, school-level factors have been

accounted for through hierarchical linear modeling (Ma 2001; Peguero and Williams 2011) which allows the researcher to estimate individual-level and contextual level impacts on the dependent variable simultaneously (Raudenbusch and Bryk 2002). In this study however, the choice to disaggregate the analysis by four separate racial groups resulted in a data structure incompatible with hierarchical linear modeling. For each group, there are several instances where fewer than 10 students have the same school in common which makes combining the

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics for all Variables, Disaggregated by Racial / Ethnic Group

	Measurement	Asian <sup>a</sup>	Black <sup>b</sup>	Latino <sup>c</sup>	White <sup>d</sup>
Bullying Victimization	0-8	.698 (1.278)	.698 (1.924)	.781 (1.366)	.895 (1.411)
Male	0,1	.502 (-)	.492 (-)	.493 (-)	.493 (-)
SES	-2.11 – 1.82	-.006 (.850)	-.221 (.674)	-.350 (.744)	.218 (.675)
Single parent	0,1	.170 (-)	.479 (-)	.250 (-)	.178 (-)
Disability	0,1	.025 (-)	.078 (-)	.072 (-)	.055 (-)
Misbehavior	0 – 6	.865 (1.200)	1.300 (1.374)	1.364 (1.445)	1.019 (1.280)
Importance of good grades	1 -4	3.558 (.651)	3.568 (.626)	3.397 (.729)	3.321 (.754)
Hours spent on homework	0 – 47	12.967 (10.078)	9.135 (8.844)	10.122 (9.300)	10.981 (8.697)
GPA	0 – 4	3.038 (.762)	2.304 (.765)	2.438 (.845)	2.886 (.772)
Friend support	1 – 3	2.557 (.418)	2.541 (.438)	2.463 (.470)	2.483 (.452)
Sports Activities	0,1	.402 (-)	.481 (-)	.420 (-)	.573 (-)
	0 – 7	.923 (1.192)	.695 (1.127)	.556 (1.025)	.871 (1.146)

<sup>a</sup> N= 1,355; <sup>b</sup> N= 1,852; <sup>c</sup> N= 2,031; <sup>d</sup> N= 8,165

Note: Means (Standard deviations)

Source: ELS, NCES; N (total = 13,403)

individual-level and school-level data impossible (Raudenbusch and Bryk 2002; Glennie and Stearns 2012). Nonetheless, fixed effects regression still provides for the ability to control for contextual-level effects and was employed in this study's analysis.

Fixed effects regression does not require data where one unit of analysis is nested within a higher level of analysis, but it also will not produce regression estimates of the effect of variables measured at the higher level of analysis. Instead, those effects are simply ruled out of the regression equation (Allison 2002). In the case of the current study, this produced an individual-level regression model where school-level influences on bullying victimization had been controlled for. Due to the nature of the measurement of bullying victimization as a count of victimization events, conditional fixed effects Poisson regression was the specific method of analysis employed. In all analyses, student weights were applied to account for the unequal probability of selection in the ELS sampling design. Missing data were replaced through multiple imputation analyses which used existing data to create prediction equations to estimate the values of all missing responses (Allison 2002).

## **RESULTS**

To serve as a baseline comparison, conditional fixed effects Poisson regression analyses across the full sample were conducted. Table 4.2 reports those results for the effects of intellectual variables, friend support, and extra-curricular activities on bullying victimization after control variables were taken into account. In model 1, the log-odds coefficients show that being male and having a disability made students more likely to be victims. In terms of race / ethnicity, Asian, Black, and Latino students were all less likely to be victimized in reference to White students. Additionally, misbehavior at school (including skipping school) was related to increased victimization. These effects remained in the subsequent two models when the key variables of interest were included. In model 2 when intellectual variables were included, agreeing that good grades were important made students' slightly less likely to be victimized while the number of hours spent on homework slightly increased the likelihood of victimization.

Converted to odds ratios, the coefficient indicates that for every additional hour spent on homework the likelihood of bullying victimization increased by about 9%. Adding friends' support and extra-curricular activities in model 3 slightly decreases that effect though it remains significant. More importantly, participating in varsity athletics decreases the likelihood of being victimized by 11%. On the other hand, for every non-academic extra-curricular activity students participated in, the likelihood of bullying victimization *increased* by 9%.

Table 4.2: Aggregate Conditional Fixed Effects Poisson Regressions of Bullying Victimization

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Control Variables</i>			
Male	.318*** (.021)	.326*** (.022)	.357*** (.022)
Asian	-.108* (.044)	-.109* (.044)	-.132** (.045)
Black	-.188*** (.039)	-.178*** (.040)	-.168*** (.040)
Latino	-.124** (.037)	-.119** (.037)	-.123** (.037)
SES	.048** (.017)	.043* (.017)	.041* (.018)
Single parent	.002 (.024)	.003 (.024)	.000 (.024)
Disability	.242*** (.037)	.256*** (.037)	.244*** (.037)
Misbehavior	.278*** (.007)	.281*** (.007)	.277*** (.008)
<i>Academic Variables</i>			
Importance of good grades		-.033* (.015)	-.026 (.016)
Hours spent on homework <sup>a</sup>		.083*** (.012)	.077*** (.012)
GPA		.011 (.016)	-.006 (.016)
<i>Status Variables</i>			
Friend support			-.053 (.032)
Sports			-.115*** (.022)
Activities			.085*** (.009)

Note: log odds coefficients (standard errors in parentheses)

<sup>a</sup> The log of this variable was used in all analyses

Source: ELS, NCES, N= 13,403

Many of these findings remained consistent when the analyses were disaggregated by race and ethnicity (displayed in Table 4.3). For example, misbehavior predicted increased likelihood of

Table 4.3: Conditional Fixed Effects Poisson Regressions Disaggregated by Race and Ethnicity

	Asian (N=1,355)			Black (N=1,852)			Latino (N=2,031)			White (N=8,165)		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
<i>Controls</i>												
Male	.498*** (.084)	.517*** (.085)	.550*** (.087)	-.046 (.066)	-.040 (.068)	-.020 (.070)	.332*** (.064)	.330*** (.064)	.317*** (.065)	.372*** (.027)	.379*** (.028)	.419*** (.028)
SES	.056 (.058)	.037 (.059)	.018 (.060)	.023 (.055)	.001 (.057)	.011 (.057)	.149** (.051)	.150** (.051)	.150** (.052)	.004 (.023)	.008 (.023)	.006 (.024)
Single parent	.021 (.103)	-.006 (.104)	-.035 (.105)	-.155* (.068)	-.149* (.069)	-.147* (.069)	.139 (.070)	.141* (.070)	.151* (.070)	.027 (.032)	.024 (.032)	.020 (.032)
Disability	.169 (.262)	.212 (.263)	.160 (.264)	.171 (.122)	.186 (.122)	.181 (.123)	.229* (.109)	.239* (.109)	.222* (.111)	.223*** (.047)	.232*** (.047)	.224*** (.047)
Misbehave	.273*** (.030)	.272*** (.031)	.275*** (.032)	.275*** (.022)	.282*** (.024)	.283*** (.024)	.265*** (.019)	.267*** (.022)	.249*** (.023)	.280*** (.009)	.279*** (.009)	.277*** (.010)
<i>Academics</i>												
Attitude		-.182** (.060)	-.196** (.064)		-.077 (.056)	-.048 (.061)		.008 (.044)	.032 (.047)		-.029 (.019)	-.024 (.020)
Effort <sup>a</sup>		.042 (.052)	.020 (.051)		.044 (.043)	.038 (.043)		.043 (.039)	.049 (.040)		.103*** (.017)	.097*** (.017)
Achievement		.112 (.074)	.075 (.074)		.096 (.053)	.084 (.053)		-.027 (.049)	-.047 (.046)		-.023 (.020)	-.038 (.021)
<i>Social Status</i>												
Support			-.042 (.132)			-.113 (.094)			-.160 (.103)			-.029 (.035)
Sports			-.016 (.084)			-.115 (.069)			.060 (.066)			-.145*** (.027)
Activities			.126*** (.036)			.064* (.029)			.055 (.030)			.084*** (.012)

Note: log odds coefficients (standard errors in parentheses)

<sup>a</sup> The log of this variable was used in all analyses

Source: ELS, NCES



victimization across all four groups while the strength of the relationship did not vary across groups either. African American students were the only group where males were not more likely to be victimized relative to females. Latino students were also the only group unaffected by non-athletic extra-curricular activities. Contrary to the study's second hypothesis, for the other three groups, non-athletic extra-curricular activities predicted increased likelihood of bullying victimization. That relationship was strongest for Asian students where each added activity resulted in a 13% increase in the likelihood of victimization.

In terms of intellectualism and bullying victimization, the only group where academic variables resulted in increased likelihood of victimization was White students. Model 2 for White students indicates that for every additional hour spent on homework, White students were 11% more likely to be bullied. This relationship was slightly diminished but remained significant after accounting for the significant effects of varsity sports participation and non-athletic extra-curricular activities. Participating in varsity athletics did decrease White students' likelihood of victimization as expected. Nonetheless, athletics did not affect other groups' victimization.

In summary, non-academic extra-curricular activities proved to make students (with the exception of Latino students) more likely to report various types of bullying victimizations. Participating in activities such as theater, the school newspaper, yearbook club, etc. proved to be more important in terms of predicting victimization compared to students' academic attitudes, effort, and achievement. Further, there is little support that minority students are bullied as a result of academics. On the other hand, spending time on homework did increase the likelihood of victimization for white students. In light of these findings, previous perspectives and future

research on race, ethnicity, and the relationship between academic activity and bullying victimization are discussed next.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study sought to address the lack of comparisons between racial and ethnic groups in the study of bullying victimization. Though many school-based ethnographies suggested that bullying or picking on students because the victims were intellectually oriented was a common practice across many groups and contexts (Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Matute-Bianchi 1986; MacLeod 1995; Tyson et al. 2005; Morris 2008), most quantitative research related to this topic has focused on African American students (Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey 1998; Farkas et al. 2002; Downey and Ainsworth-Darnell 2002; Wildhagen 2011). To broaden the scope to Asian, Latino, White, and Black students, this study used a nationally representative sample of U.S. high school sophomores to examine the extent to which students from each of these groups would be more likely to report being bullied in connection with their academic attitudes, effort, and / or achievement. Based on studies that suggested support from friends, participation in athletics, and participation in non-academic extracurricular activities / clubs could shelter students from being singled out and / or bullied (Coleman 1961; Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Kinney 1993; Eder and Kinney 1995; Horvat and Lewis 2003; Carter 2005), measures of those aspects of students' day to day experiences were also included in the study. Initially, an aggregate analysis was performed to ascertain the effect of academic and social variables across the entire sample. This analysis was then compared with separate analyses for each racial / ethnic group.

The aggregate analysis showed that out of academic attitudes, effort, and achievement, effort as measured through hours spent on homework predicted increased likelihood of bullying victimization. Friend support had no effect on victimization however being a varsity athlete decreased the likelihood of victimization as expected. Non-athletic extra-curricular activities increased the likelihood of victimization on the other hand. Those findings in the aggregate analysis were most closely mirrored by the findings for white students only. With white students constituting 61% of the sample, they carried the most weight in the aggregate analyses. Situated in the larger literature where most quantitative studies focused on African American students, the findings for white students in this study showed that academically privileged groups can be bullied on account of academics too. Oppositional cultures frustrated at their groups' relatively deprived position in the U.S. education system may not be the only explanation for the stigmatization and bullying of academically oriented students as others have suggested (Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Farkas et al. 2002).

Nonetheless, non-athletic extra-curricular activities predicted increased likelihood of victimization for Asian, African American, and White students. In the disaggregated analyses, this was the only finding that applied to multiple groups. Although participation in various activities may expose students to opportunities to make friends and gain status through membership in various groups, according to these results the number of activities participated in could be another source of stigma that fellow students target through bullying. Further, this risk of victimization seems to transcend racial / ethnic group boundaries typically expected to influence the risk of victimization in different ways. Though unexpected, finding a pattern such as this was a goal of the disaggregated analysis. Based on the use of conditional fixed effects

Poisson regression, this finding is significant above and beyond any potential school-level effects on bullying victimization.

Despite these findings there are still shortcomings to be noted and improvements to be made in future research. For example, LGBT status and obesity were not measured by ELS; thus they were not controlled for in this study despite previous research suggesting their association with bullying victimization (Janssen et al. 2004; Halpern et al. 2005; Birkett et al. 2009; Robinson and Espelage 2011). ELS also did not control for characteristics of students' social networks or students' structural position in those networks which has been found to be related to the risk of bullying victimization (Faris and Felmlee 2011). Social networks may provide a more effective measure of students' peer support against bullying targeted at intellectualism compared to the measure of the importance that friends place on good grades.

Further, this study's findings refer to a sample of 10<sup>th</sup> graders who are at a stage in school where bullying behavior tends to be in decline as high school social statuses are solidified and competition over status decreases (Pellegrini and Bartini 2000; Milner 2004). Therefore this study may only be capturing the tail-end of students' bullying victimization experiences in school. Studies of younger students and students who have made a more recent transition from one school to another could be initiated under a similar framework as this study. Measures of bullying victimization were self-reported which also brings up the possibility that victimization may have been under or over-reported.

As social media continues to flourish, future bullying research should treat cyber-bullying victimization as an outcome as well. Conducted in 2002, the ELS study surveyed students who attended high school before the explosion of social media that occurred soon thereafter.

Bullying can also include relational bullying such as spreading rumors and exclusion from social

groups (Olweus 2001; Jordan and Austin 2012) however this type of bullying was not examined either. Finally, studies on the relationship between academics, extra-curricular activities, and bullying victimization should examine the perspective of the bully to provide a fuller picture of the interactional process of bullying.

## **CONCLUSION**

By focusing on the importance that students' social status plays in the likelihood of bullying victimization, this study has used quantitative, national-level data to indicate that non-academic extracurricular activities put students' at risk for increased victimization. Further, this study also contributed the separate analysis of several different racial / ethnic groups and showed that the relationship applies to Asian, African American, and White students. Despite the limitations of the research, the results from this study suggest there are important status differences for high school varsity athletics compared to other extra-curricular activities. If being an athlete garners a student increased social status while being a member of several non-athletic activity groups marks a student as a potential target for bullying, there are important implications for peer relations and out-of-classroom education in schools. Students who join various activity clubs often engage in community outreach, creative projects, and other valuable educational experiences. However, the current findings suggest that there is a lack of prestige associated with these types of educational experiences. If these types of activities are stigmatized and their participants bullied, students may be discouraged from participating in such activities in the future.

In terms of White students specifically, the study also showed that an increase in hours spent on homework was related to increased risk of bullying victimization. Observations of

students' peer cultures also indicate that students have a sense of how much effort their peers exert towards academic achievement outside of school as well (Kinney 1993; Morris 2008). The preoccupation with peers' academic effort that may identify someone as a nerd seems to be common due to the significance that social status plays in high schools (Milner 2004). In addition, when considering that dedication to turning in assignments and otherwise being prepared for class generally results in improved academic performance, it is reasonable to expect that students in the schools sampled by ELS would have some awareness of their peers' academic effort. Like participation in out-of-classroom educational experiences, educators want to encourage studying for obvious reasons. However, studying that is connected to a potential decrease in one's social status and bullying victimization may inhibit students' studying and performance in the future. Wildhagen (2011), using the same data as this study, found evidence among White students to bolster this suggestion. Ceasing the behavior that causes one to be stigmatized would also be consistent with Goffman's (1963) predictions of how stigmatized individuals adapt to their victimization. Thus, when considering the importance of academic achievement for students' educational, social, and economic futures, this study points to another significant problem in the U.S. education system.

In other words, the policy implications of these findings suggest that in a broad sense and within individual schools, a direct focus should be placed on elevating the social status of hard working students and students who participate in non-athletic extra-curricular activities. It is true that such individuals will be rewarded with good grades, awards, scholarships, and the opportunity to earn high incomes as an adult, but some students may be discouraged from pursuing the same path when social status (including avoiding bullying and other forms of stigmatization) is understandably a significant priority for many adolescent students. This is

another aspect of schools' ecologies that can be addressed in bullying prevention programs (see Swearer et al. 2010). Milner (2004) also points out that providing students with more autonomy may decrease the extent to which status is contested for via putting down one's peers. In other words, softening the rigidity of the U.S. education system may also soften the need for students to victimize each other. On the other hand, the onus does not always have to fall on schools and educators. Students are agents as well and it is clear that most students do understand the importance of education. Thus, students can be directly involved in bullying prevention efforts aimed at elevating the status of successful students.

Beyond these calls to "change the culture", current bullying prevention programs in schools should be sustained as well. Without continued efforts to protect potentially vulnerable students from bullying, academically oriented students will continue to be at risk for many of the well-documented psychological and physiological consequences of bullying. Obviously, such outcomes are not desirable for any students. Still, the fact that high effort and high achieving students are stigmatized, devalued, and subjected to those risks sends a message which conflicts with educators', parents', and policymakers' stance on the importance of education in our society. Thus, the topic merits continued attention and research among academics, educators, and policymakers.

## **CHAPTER 5: LATINO STUDENTS AND BULLYING VICTIMIZATION: IMMIGRATION, EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, AND SCHOOL LOCATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

From 2000 to 2010, the Latino population in the U.S. grew by 43%. Further, this increase accounted for over half of the total population increase in the country (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). At the same time there has been an increase in awareness of the issue of bullying in schools across the country. As a rapidly growing population of students, it is important to develop an understanding of the extent to which Latino students are victims of bullying and why they may be subjected to such victimization.

Bullying encompasses a range of victimizations including being attacked verbally, physically, and socially by peers (Olweus 2001). Verbal attacks include being called names or otherwise mocked by peers, physical bullying involves being hit or having one's property stolen or destroyed, and bullying at the hands of several peers at once includes being the subject of negative rumors and / or social isolation. In other words, far from students simply "picking on" each other, bullying is a multi-faceted phenomenon with serious consequences. For example, victims of bullying tend to experience increased symptoms of depression, and anxiety, and decreased self-esteem (Jordan and Austin 2012). Academic-related consequences of bullying include problems such as poor academic achievement (Arsenault et al. 2006; Beran, Hughes, and Lupart 2008; Nakamoto and Schwartz 2010; Juvonen 2011), decreased classroom participation (Ladd, Harold-Brown, and Reiser 2008), negative evaluations from teachers (Juvonen, Wang, and Espinoza 2011), detachment from school (Wei and Williams 2004; Popp and Peguero 2011), and academic withdrawal (Smith et al. 2004). The fear of being victimized in the future hampers concentration in school (Addington and Yablon 2011) which provides a mechanism for the



relationship between victimization and lower grades (Arsenault et al. 2006; Beran, Hughes, and Lupart 2008).

For first generation immigrant students in particular, the U.S. school system is often the initial setting for students' assimilation into U.S. society. Considering the aforementioned consequences, Latino students being subject to bullying victimization has the potential to affect the future educational attainment and economic contribution of a large and growing segment of the U.S. population. That is why this study focuses on bullying victimization and Latino students exclusively. In this study previous research on Latino students' bullying victimization is first reviewed. This research, though informative, points to the need to focus on the significance of where Latino students are attending school and the extent to which factors such as location and family immigration history may mediate students' chances for being the victim of bullying. Using data collected by the Education Longitudinal Study (ELS) of 2002, the study addresses those issues in order to further our understanding of Latino students and bullying victimization. Implications for the previous literature, current school policies, and Latino students' educational futures are then discussed.

### **Latino Students: Ethnicity, Immigration, and Bullying**

Although the previous analysis in this dissertation did not indicate any significant findings related to Latino students' bullying victimization, previous research using both the ELS data and case studies has examined the effects of ethnicity, immigration, academics, and extra-curricular activities on the likelihood of victimization for Latino students. In terms of academics, findings are mixed in terms of the extent to which Latino students may be bullied for high achievement and / or positive orientations towards academics. In another exploration of

“oppositional cultures,” Flores-Gonzales (2005) found that high achieving Latino students in an urban high school did not experience a “burden of acting white” because they were tracked and segregated away from the low-achieving students. In a similar vein, Mehan, Hubbard, and Villeneuve (1994) found that even when students had the opportunity to participate in a program designed to reduce tracking, high achieving Latino students were able to maintain their identities as high achievers without simultaneous challenges to their ethnic identity.

On the other hand, in central California, stigmatization and bullying perpetrated by white students (who constituted the majority group in the school) was reserved for Mexican immigrant students who showed promise in school while Japanese immigrant students endured no such problems in the same school (Matute-Bianchi 1986). This observation was consistent with the expectation that stereotypes of Asian students’ intellectual superiority would make academic success normal and unremarkable among this group (Lee 2009). Peguero (2012) points out that these stereotypes have been consistent aspect of Latino and Asian students’ schooling for several decades. Other groups such as Haitian immigrant students in southern Florida were subject to discrimination and segregation based on skin color (Portes and Zhou 1993). The students were channeled into social groups and networks of impoverished African American students who held similar reservations about academic success as described in studies of involuntary minority groups where students were stigmatized for agreeing with the importance of academic achievement (Ogbu 1978; 1987; Fordham and Ogbu 1986). For the Haitian students, there was a tension between dreams of upward mobility and the stigma associated with academic effort and achievement based on a dismal economic reality.

These studies point to the importance of ethnicity and immigration when studying Latino students’ experiences related to academics, bullying, and stigmatization in the U.S. education

system. While in the previous chapter the research questions focused on differences in bullying victimization between the major racial / ethnic groups, this chapter addresses the variety of ethnicities and immigrant generations within the Latino group. Depending on individual characteristics, their family's origin, and how long their families have been established in the U.S., Latino students have varying levels of academic achievement (Crosnoe 2005) and aspirations (Bohon, Kirkpatrick-Johnson, and Gorman 2006). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Latino students' experiences in terms of bullying victimization may also be varied. This chapter specifically addresses that possibility with nationally representative data.

Using the same data as this dissertation, previous research has studied associations between immigration, extra-curricular activities, academics, and Latino students' bullying victimization. In a study of immigration and violent victimization in school, Peguero (2009) found that Latino students from third-generation immigrant families were more likely to report being victimized compared to students from families who had arrived in the U.S. more recently. The author speculated that increased integration and "Americanization" may be related to the increased likelihood of victimization. In terms of Latino students' academic achievement and extra-curricular activities, while standardized test scores did not predict increased victimization for Latino students, participation in sports did predict increased violent bullying victimization (Peguero and Williams 2011). When examining differences between immigrant generations on the same issue, Peguero (2013) found that first and second generation immigrant students participating in sports were more likely to be victimized than third generation student-athletes. These studies, which employ the same data as this dissertation, point to other research questions related to Latino students' academic and extra-curricular activities that are addressed in the present analysis.

The first contribution to be made in this study involves the measurement of bullying victimization. Although Olweus (2001) notes that bullying can take many non-violent forms the previous studies only focus on violent altercations or property victimization. Further, immigrant students are less likely to report such types of victimization on surveys due to fears that reporting the incidents could result in more hardship or even deportation (Chaudry et al. 2010). The present analysis includes several measures of both violent bullying victimization as well as other non-violent ways of being picked on or stigmatized to take into account students' varying interpretations of what constitutes bullying and the possibility of under-reporting.

In terms of the second contribution, two of the Peguero (2009; 2013) studies employed multilevel modeling even though limiting their samples to less than 10,000 students made the multilevel estimation of school-level effects ambiguous due small amounts of students nested within some of the ELS schools. In other words, school-level influences were controlled for however the studies could not determine which contextual influences of the school mattered for students' victimization. This present analysis avoids that issue by only focusing on school location instead of including several school-level predictors in a multilevel model without sufficient nesting of students within schools. Studies of Latinos and immigration (as well as other immigrant groups), routinely emphasize the significance of place in helping to explain variation in immigrants' experiences (Shaw and Mckay 1969; Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002; Shihadeh and Barranco 2012). The next section fleshes out the reasoning for placing a priority on school location in an analysis of Latino students, academics, extra-curricular activities, and bullying.

## **School Location, Bullying, Extra-Curricular Activities, and Academics**

Before the 1990s, Latinos had settled in a few select locations in the U.S. including southern California, Texas, southern Florida, and large cities such as New York and Chicago (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002). More recently, demographic and migration patterns indicate that Latinos are spreading out beyond those traditional areas (Durand, Massey, and Chavret 2000; Durand, Massey, and Capoferro 2005; Kochhar, Suro, and Tafoya 2005). Research on immigration and crime found that when Latinos settled in the aforementioned *traditional* destinations, crime rates went down due to the stable ethnic enclaves that provided social and economic support to new arrivals (Sampson 2008). On the other hand, Shihadeh and Barranco (2012) show that crime goes up when Latinos settle in *new* destinations where the population influx combined with a lack of social support contributes to social disorganization.

If criminological outcomes vary by destination type, educational experiences for Latino students may as well. Stamps and Bohon (2006) find that Latinos have higher educational attainment in new destinations for example. For the purposes of the current topic of bullying victimization in school, researchers may find similar differences. For example, if Latino students in new destinations are viewed as economic threats to established residents as has been reported in various case studies of immigration (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou 1997), they may be more susceptible to bullying victimization. Academic achievement, or at least an orientation towards academics, may be viewed as an indication that Latino students could pose a threat to students from established groups. On the other hand, hard work and success in school may be more socially acceptable in traditional destinations where successful Latinos are more likely to be members of the local community. Variation in immigrant generation status is important to account for as well, especially in terms of the studies

using ELS data that indicated third-generation students may be more likely to be victimized (Peguero 2009; Peguero 2013).

Similar considerations can be made for Latino students participating in extra-curricular activities. In non-traditional destinations, if Latino students are viewed as threats their participation in extra-curricular activities could be interpreted as taking opportunities away from other more established students. If such prejudices or hostilities do exist, participation may increase the visibility of the student as a potential target for bullying. Latino students participating in these activities may not be as disruptive to the social fabric in traditional destinations however, as Latinos are more likely to be integrated into many facets of the local area. Nonetheless, the difference between sports compared to club / non-athletic activities should be considered as well when considering the general popularity of athletes (Coleman 1961; Eder and Kinney 1995) and the findings from the previous analysis. The considerations of the previous literature as well as the previous studies contained in this dissertation inform the present study.

### **The Present Study**

Previous analyses in this dissertation indicate that both academic factors and extra-curricular activities can be associated with bullying victimization. When students were disaggregated by race, little was learned about Latino students however. As the literature above has shown, Latino students as a group have a diverse array of ethnic backgrounds, family histories, and educational experiences. In order to learn more about Latino students' bullying victimization, these many factors were taken into account in the current study. In addition, to progress beyond existing studies using ELS data on Latino students' exposure to violence in

schools (Peguero 2009; Peguero and Williams 2011; Peguero 2013) this study prioritized school location as another factor that may moderate the extent to which Latino students are bullied in concert with academic factors and extra-curricular activities.

Specifically, three hypotheses can be derived from what has already been documented on Latino students' victimization and bullying victimization in general as indicated by the previous dissertation analyses.

Hypothesis 1: Analyses of bullying victimization will indicate significant differences between Latino students' victimization in traditional compared to new destinations.

Hypothesis 2: Participation in extra-curricular activities will be associated with increased likelihood of victimization for Latino students in new destinations.

Hypothesis 3: Academic factors will be associated with increased likelihood of victimization for Latino students in new destinations.

These hypotheses were tested for multiple measures of bullying victimization to take into account the various ways that students experience and perceive bullying victimization. The data and measurements used for those variables as well as the rest of the study's variables are detailed in the next section.

## **METHODS**

### **Data and Sample**

The ELS base-year questionnaire was chosen as the data source for this study. The questionnaire was administered during students' sophomore year in high school. Data collection took place in 2002 after the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) selected a sample of

750 schools from across the United States. From each school, a sample of students was selected to participate. During the base-year ELS data collection, students were asked questions referring to their individual characteristics, extra-curricular activities, experiences of being bullied, as well as academic attitudes, effort, and achievement. In addition, ELS oversampled for students from minority groups making the data ideal for use in a study on Latino students, academics, extra-curricular activities, and bullying victimization. Students without valid sampling weights were excluded due to the need to account for the stratified design of the sampling frame. After also excluding students with missing data related to bullying victimization, this resulted in a sample size of 2,031 students who identified Latino heritage.

### **Measures of Bullying Victimization**

To take into account the various ways students may perceive bullying victimization, a composite measure was created from responses to four survey items concerning in-school victimization. These items referred to the following events: being threatened with physical harm, being hit, having money or other possessions forcefully taken, and being “bullied”. This measure accounted for a wide range of perceived victimizations encompassed under Olweus’ (2001) definition of bullying. For each item, the student could report that an event happened never, once or twice, or more than twice during the first semester of their sophomore year. For each item, never was coded with a 0, once or twice was coded with a 1, and more than twice was coded with a 2. Aggregating the response to each item into one measure of bullying victimization resulted in a scale ranging from 0-8 ( $\alpha = .65$ ). This measure is referred to as *bullying incidents*.



The second dependent variable was used to account for the possibility that the previous measure is mostly physical in nature, making male students more likely to have experienced those victimizations regardless of their academic and extra-curricular pursuits (see Hoover et al. 1992; Whitney and Smith 1993; Jeffrey et al. 2001). A more gender-neutral measurement was derived from a survey item which asked students the extent to which they agreed with the statement that “I often feel put down by other students in class”. Response options were strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree (measured 1-4). This ordinal measure, also based on student self-report, is referred to as *putdowns*.<sup>8</sup>

### **Extra-Curricular Activities and Academics**

The previous analysis in the dissertation indicated that participating in both athletic and non-athletic extra-curricular activities may be related to students’ bullying victimization. To account for the popularity that varsity athletes tend to garner in high school (Coleman 1961; Eder and Kinney 1995; Milner 2004), sports participation was measured as a binary variable indicating that a student participated in at least one interscholastic varsity sport<sup>9</sup> during the school year the survey was conducted. Participation in non-athletic extra-curricular activities was measured as the number of school-sponsored activities<sup>10</sup> that a student participated in during

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<sup>8</sup> A third dependent variable was analyzed but not included in the results due to a lack of substantive findings. A binary variable indicating that a student reported being “bullied” at least once during the previous semester indicated that only 326 out of 2,031 students report such an event. This measure may have suffered from under-reporting as suggested by Chaudry et al. (2010).

<sup>9</sup> The sports students could indicate they participated in included baseball, softball, basketball, football, soccer, individual sports, other sports, or cheerleading / pompom / drill team.

<sup>10</sup> The activities could have included musical or theatrical activities, student government, honors societies, school yearbook / newspaper / magazines, hobby, academic, or service clubs.

the school year the survey was conducted. With 8 possible school-sponsored activities, the measure ranged from 0-8.

To measure intellectualism, measures of academic attitudes, effort, and achievement were included in the analysis. Attitude was measured by students' responses to the survey item, "How important are good grades to you?" where students could respond "not important", "somewhat important", "important", or "very important". Responses were coded 1-4 where 1 indicated "not important". Effort was measured by combining students' reported number of hours per week spent on homework both in and out of school during the previous semester. Due to a positive skew, this variable was transformed with a log transformation. Academic achievement was measured by students' 9th grade GPA as indicated by official transcripts obtained by the NCES. GPA ranged from 0-4. In the two previous analyses in this dissertation, the only findings related to attitude towards the importance of good grades were that the greater the agreement, the less likely students were to report being bullied in various ways. GPA and homework at times were related to increased chances of reporting bullying victimization, though those findings specifically applied to male students and white students respectively. After placing the analytical focus on Latino students, their diverse backgrounds / experiences, and school location, new findings may emerge however<sup>11</sup>.

### **Control Variables and Latino Diversity**

Like the previous analysis, several individual characteristics that are associated with variation in bullying victimization were controlled for. Gender (male) and living in a single parent family were controlled for using binary variables. Disability status was also measured as a

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<sup>11</sup> After considering that there were no significant findings for peer support in Chapter 4, that variable was not included in this analysis.

binary variable that indicated a student was a member of one or more federal disability categories and participated in an individualized education program at his or her school. ELS compiled the disability information based on reports from school personnel. Socioeconomic status (SES) was controlled for through a composite and weighted measure. As part of the base-year data collection, ELS surveyed students' parents / guardians and compiled information concerning their education, income, and occupational prestige. This information was linked to individual students to produce the composite measure of student SES. The measure was weighted to have a mean of 0. Finally, getting into physical fights at school, skipping school, and otherwise getting in trouble at school as reported by the student were controlled for to account for the correlation between misbehavior and bullying victimization. All three types of misbehavior were coded as either 0 = the event never happened, 1 = it happened once or twice, 2 = it happened more than twice. All three items were then combined into one index ranging from 0-6 to create the misbehavior variable ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

Other control variables were related more specifically to the diverse backgrounds and immigrant experiences of Latino students. Language is controlled for with a binary variable where a value of 1 indicates the student is a native speaker of English. Two binary variables also indicate students' ethnicity. While the reference group is students with Mexican ethnic heritage, the first binary variable indicates that a student's ethnic background is either from Central / South America while the second indicates that a students' ethnic background is from Caribbean nations such as Cuba, The Dominican Republic, or Puerto Rico. Finally, immigrant generation is also controlled for through two binary variables. The reference group is first generation students who were not born in the U.S. Second generation indicates that the student was born in the U.S. but at least one parent was born outside the U.S. Third generation indicates that the student and

both parents / guardians were born in the U.S. Table 5.1 lists the descriptive statistics disaggregated by school location for each variable.

### **Analytic Strategy**

With only 2,031 students in the sample, although the students are nested within high schools, in most instances those high schools will only be represented by a small number of Latino students. This lack of clustering within schools prevents meaningful use of hierarchical linear modeling (Raudenbusch and Bryk 2002; Glennie and Stearns 2012). In this study, the main contextual factor of interest was location of the school which was provided by the ELS data. Although other contextual factors of the school could not be controlled for through HLM, analyses disaggregated by school location were conducted to examine the importance of place for Latino students' bullying victimization. Specifically, this provided an analysis of the correlates of Latino students' bullying victimization in locations Latinos have traditionally settled in compared to locations that Latinos have only recently begun to populate. Before 1990, Latinos had traditionally settled in urban locations such as New York, Miami, Chicago, and Southern California (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002). As a proxy indicator for those *traditional destinations*, analyses limited to students from schools in urban locales (N=945) are compared with analyses limited to students from schools in rural and suburban locales (N=1,086)<sup>12</sup>. Those areas serve as an approximation of *new destinations* for Latino settlement and migration (Durand, Massey, and Chavret 2000; Durand, Massey, and Capoferro 2005; Kochhar, Suro, and Tafoya 2005).

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<sup>12</sup> ELS used Common Core of Data definitions to determine which schools fell into the categories of Urban, Rural, or Suburban.

It is possible that some rural schools are located in communities where Latino families had been established well before 2002 when the ELS project began. Likewise, some urban schools may have been receiving Latino students for the first time in 2002. Nonetheless, these approximate markers of new and traditional destinations represent a first step in assessing how bullying related to academics and extra-curricular activities may vary by place for Latino students. Table 5.1 reports the descriptive statistics of all variables disaggregated by school location.

Table 5.1: Descriptive Statistics for All Variables, Disaggregated by School Location

Variable, Measurement	Urban Schools (N=945)		Rural / Suburban Schools (N=1,086)	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Bullying Victimizations: 0-8	.75	1.32	.80	1.37
Putdowns: 1-4	1.94	.75	1.92	.73
Male: 0,1	.47	-	.51	-
SES: -1.97 - 1.8	-.35	.76	-.35	.73
Single parent: 0,1	.27	-	.23	-
Disability: 0,1	.05	-	.09	-
Misbehavior: 0-6	1.49	1.56	1.43	1.57
English native language: 0,1	.47	-	.53	-
Cuba, DR, PR: 0,1	.20	-	.20	-
Central / South Am: 0,1	.12	-	.15	-
Second generation: 0,1	.51	-	.51	-
Third generation: 0,1	.26	-	.30	-
Sports: 0,1	.42	-	.42	-
Other activities: 0-8	.56	1.00	.56	1.04
Importance of good grades: 1-4	3.44	.70	3.38	.75
Hours of homework: 0-47	10.25	9.25	10.01	9.34
GPA: 1-4	2.64	.96	2.438	.845

Source: NCES, ELS 2002

When considering that about 53% of the sample attended a Suburban or Rural school, one can be more confident that students from urban areas not considered traditional destinations<sup>13</sup> are not over-represented in the sample.

For both measures of bullying victimization<sup>14</sup>, analyses inclusive of the full sample were conducted for comparison to the analyses disaggregated by school location. Differences between the aggregate analysis and the locale-specific analyses highlighted the value in making the distinction between Urban schools and Rural / Suburban schools. Each analysis proceeded in three stages. First, control variables including individual characteristics, English language familiarity, ethnicity, and immigrant generation were included in the analysis. Second, the effects of extra-curricular activities including sports and non-athletic clubs / activities were added to the equation. Third and finally, academic attitudes, effort, and achievement were added to the equation. In line with previous findings in this dissertation, this strategy highlighted potential associations between bullying victimization and students' athletic, club, and academic activities after controlling for other characteristics associated with victimization. This provided for a location-specific analysis of which of these aspects of Latino students' educational experiences may be stigmatized by their peers.

## **FINDINGS**

Comparisons between school locations reveal little difference in either measure of bullying victimization. Latino students on average reported less than one bullying incident while

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<sup>13</sup> New urban destinations for Latinos include Atlanta, GA, Raleigh, NC, Orlando, FL, Seattle, WA, and Washington DC (Suro and Singer 2002; Stamps and Bohon 2006).

<sup>14</sup> The first dependent variable (bullying victimizations) was measured as a count of events and thus required Poisson regression. The second dependent variable (putdowns) was measured as an ordinal variable and required ordered logistic regression.

the average response for the putdowns measure is very close to 2 which represents the “disagree” category on the scale of “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Standing on their own, these results are consistent with the previous analysis in this dissertation where few factors were related to increased chances of Latino students experiencing bullying victimization. It is notable that more bullying incidents were not reported among students in urban schools despite the tendency of minority students in urban areas tend to be subject to more violence both within the school and in their local communities (Kozol 2005; Peguero 2012). Nonetheless, as the multivariate results show, once school location and generational status were taken into account when predicting the effect of extra-curricular activities and academics on bullying victimization, important distinctions began to emerge.

### **Bullying Incidents**

The aggregate analysis of bullying incidents shown in Table 5.2 confirms that this measure of bullying victimization is more likely to be experienced by male students compared to female students. Across the entire sample, Latino students with ethnic heritage in Central and South America, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico were more likely to report bullying incidents relative to students with ethnic heritage in Mexico. Generational status was not significant, but non-athletic extra-curricular activities did predict increased likelihood of victimization.

Comparing Table 5.3 (students in urban schools) and Table 5.4 (students in rural or suburban schools) reveals a different pattern however. In urban schools, generational status was also non-significant while in rural / suburban schools third-generation students were more likely to report being victimized relative to first generation students. Specifically, model 3 shows that

Table 5.2: Aggregate Poisson Regressions on Bullying Incidents

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Controls</i>			
Male	.317*** (.053)	.344*** (.053)	.328*** (.054)
SES	.063 (.0437)	.056 (.037)	.063 (.057)
Single parent	.027 (.058)	.033 (.059)	.036 (.058)
Disability	.356*** (.079)	.315*** (.080)	.290*** (.081)
Misbehavior	.232*** (.014)	.229*** (.014)	.220*** (.015)
English native lang.	.094 (.063)	.010 (.063)	.103 (.063)
Cuba, DR, PR	.269*** (.061)	.258*** (.062)	.270*** (.062)
Central / South Am.	.218** (.077)	.166* (.078)	.166* (.078)
Second generation	-.118 (.075)	-.110 (.075)	-.112 (.075)
Third generation	.174 (.090)	.164 (.089)	.149 (.090)
<i>Extra-curricular</i>			
Sports		-.006 (.053)	-.000 (.052)
Other activities		.087*** (.021)	.088*** (.021)
<i>Academics</i>			
Importance of good grades			-.029 (.036)
Hours of homework <sup>a</sup>			.042 (.024)
GPA			-.052 (.028)

<sup>a</sup>The log of this variable was used in all analyses.

\*p <.05, \*\*p <.01, \*\*\*p <.001

Source: NCES, ELS 2002

after controlling for other individual characteristics, extra-curricular activities, and academic factors, third generation students in rural / suburban schools were 38% more like to report being the victim of bullying incidents. Further, non-athletic extra-curricular activities and time spent on homework predicted increased chances of reporting victimizations for the same group of students while these same factors were not significant for students in urban schools. Although the effects for non-athletic activities and homework (11% and 7% respectively) were weaker than the effect of being a third generation student, these findings provide further evidence for the



Table 5.3: Poisson Regressions on Bullying Incidents for Students at Urban Schools

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Controls</i>			
Male	.297*** (.078)	.306*** (.080)	.295*** (.081)
SES	.105 (.054)	.094 (.055)	.104 (.056)
Single parent	.058 (.086)	.066 (.086)	.068 (.086)
Disability	.291* (.136)	.281* (.138)	.255 (.141)
Misbehavior	.250*** (.051)	.249*** (.021)	.242*** (.022)
English native lang.	.206* (.093)	.202* (.093)	.208* (.094)
Cuba, DR, PR	.252** (.089)	.246** (.090)	.257** (.090)
Central / South Am.	.045 (.125)	.035 (.126)	.051 (.127)
Second generation	-.202 (.124)	-.193 (.104)	-.197 (.105)
Third generation	-.082 (.131)	.075 (.131)	-.082 (.132)
<i>Extra-curricular</i>			
Sports		.037 (.079)	.035 (.079)
Other activities		.031 (.036)	.035 (.037)
<i>Academics</i>			
Importance of good grades			-.009 (.052)
Hours of homework <sup>a</sup>			.006 (.036)
GPA			-.044 (.042)

<sup>a</sup>The log of this variable was used in all analyses.

\*p <.05, \*\*p <.01, \*\*\*p <.001

Source: NCES, ELS 2002

different climate for Latino students in rural / suburban schools compared to Latino students in urban schools.

In returning to the aggregate model, the importance of generation status and hours spent on homework was masked when all Latino students were lumped into one category. Similarly, the disaggregated analyses have shown that compared to the analysis of all Latinos in the previous section of this dissertation, when generational status and school location are accounted for, one does find evidence that students' membership in non-athletic activity groups and time spent on homework are related to Latino students' chances of being the victims of bullying.

Table 5.4: Poisson Regressions on Bullying Incidents for Students at Rural / Suburban Schools

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Controls</i>			
Male	.325*** (.071)	.354*** (.073)	.342*** (.074)
SES	.038 (.051)	.044 (.051)	.049 (.051)
Single parent	.029 (.079)	.025 (.079)	.025 (.079)
Disability	.347*** (.099)	.295** (.101)	.280** (.101)
Misbehavior	.214*** (.019)	.212*** (.019)	.202*** (.020)
English native lang.	-.007 (.086)	.009 (.086)	.024 (.086)
Cuba, DR, PR	.273** (.086)	.267*** (.086)	.276** (.086)
Central / South Am.	.340*** (.098)	.241* (.102)	.220* (.102)
Second generation	-.012 (.109)	-.023 (.109)	-.032 (.109)
Third generation	.405*** (.127)	.348*** (.127)	.322* (.128)
<i>Extra-curricular</i>			
Sports		-.036 (.071)	-.025 (.071)
Other activities		.106*** (.026)	.102*** (.027)
<i>Academics</i>			
Importance of good grades			-.029 (.044)
Hours of homework <sup>a</sup>			.071* (.033)
GPA			-.055 (.040)

<sup>a</sup>The log of this variable was used in all analyses.

\*p <.05, \*\*p <.01, \*\*\*p <.001

Source: NCES, ELS 2002

This has been indicated despite Latino students' relatively low reporting of bullying incidents as detailed through the descriptive statistics.

### **Putdowns**

In the aggregate analysis of Latino students' reports of the extent to which they felt "put down by other students in class" (reported in Table 5.5), there is evidence to suggest that this measure was indeed more gender neutral than the measure of bullying incidents which included physical forms of bullying. Unlike bullying incidents, there is no significant difference between male and female students in terms of their likelihood to report experiencing putdowns. When

Table 5.5: Aggregate Ordered Logistic Regressions on Putdowns

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Controls</i>			
Male	.044 (.087)	.053 (.089)	.064 (.091)
SES	-.072 (.064)	-.064 (.065)	-.075 (.065)
Single parent	-.048 (.101)	-.054 (.101)	-.054 (.101)
Disability	.625*** (.176)	.617*** (.177)	.627*** (.177)
Misbehavior	-.001 (.028)	-.001 (.028)	.006 (.030)
English native lang.	.066 (.107)	.068 (.107)	.061 (.107)
Cuba, DR, PR	-.045 (.114)	-.049 (.115)	-.051 (.115)
Central / South Am.	.156 (.132)	.161 (.132)	.158 (.133)
Second generation	-.471*** (.121)	-.470*** (.121)	-.466*** (.121)
Third generation	-.447*** (.155)	-.435** (.155)	-.428** (.156)
<i>Extra-curricular</i>			
Sports		-.080 (.091)	-.084 (.091)
Other activities		-.005 (.044)	-.015 (.045)
<i>Academics</i>			
Importance of good grades			-.014 (.064)
Hours of homework <sup>a</sup>			-.015 (.043)
GPA			.070 (.050)

<sup>a</sup>The log of this variable was used in all analyses.

\*p <.05, \*\*p <.01, \*\*\*p <.001

Source: NCES, ELS 2002

focusing on students' extra-curricular activities and academics, they were not related to feeling put down either. However, generational status was relevant again. In this case, second and third generation students were less likely to feel putdown relative to first generation students. Thus, comparing the two types of victimization (bullying incidents vs. putdowns) indicates that while first generation students were more likely to report feeling put down by other students in class, they were less likely to report being victimized through being threatened, hit, having something stolen, or simply being "bullied." For first generation students, lack of familiarity with U.S. culture or the English language may be met with the verbal harassment of a putdown rather than physical victimization. In Tables 5.6 and 5.7 where the comparisons between school locations

Table 5.6: Ordered Logistic Regressions on Putdowns for Students at Urban Schools

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Controls</i>			
Male	-.097 (.129)	-.109 (.132)	-.096 (.133)
SES	.043 (.092)	.046 (.095)	.030 (.096)
Single parent	.097 (.146)	.100 (.146)	.090 (.147)
Disability	1.002** (.094)	1.014** (.296)	1.025** (.097)
Misbehavior	.056 (.043)	.057 (.043)	.065 (.045)
English native lang.	.015 (.156)	.012 (.155)	.005 (.156)
Cuba, DR, PR	.012 (.167)	.014 (.170)	.000 (.170)
Central / South Am.	.381 (.201)	.386 (.201)	.365 (.202)
Second generation	-.550** (.171)	-.551** (.171)	-.557** (.172)
Third generation	-.500* (.224)	-.505* (.224)	-.509* (.225)
<i>Extra-curricular</i>			
Sports		.042 (.133)	.045 (.133)
Other activities		-.026 (.166)	-.032 (.167)
<i>Academics</i>			
Importance of good grades			-.047 (.098)
Hours of homework <sup>a</sup>			-.026 (.065)
GPA			.091 (.073)

<sup>a</sup>The log of this variable was used in all analyses.

\*p <.05, \*\*p <.01, \*\*\*p <.001

Source: NCES, ELS 2002

are made, the results for students at urban schools match the aggregate model. Second and third generation students in urban schools were 43% and 40% less likely to report feeling put down respectively. On the other hand, only second generation students in rural or suburban schools had similar decreased likelihoods of being victimized. Although extra-curricular activities and academic factors were not significant for either location, controlling for students' extra-curricular activities in rural / suburban schools rendered the effect of third generation status insignificant. Additionally, although all Latino students with disabilities were more likely to feel put down, comparing these two tables show that students in urban schools were responsible for that finding

Table 5.7: Ordered Logistic Regressions on Putdowns for Students at Rural / Suburban Schools

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Controls</i>			
Male	.187 (.120)	.224 (.124)	.231 (.124)
SES	-.185* (.090)	-.171 (.091)	-.176 (.091)
Single parent	-.193 (.142)	-.205 (.142)	-.202 (.142)
Disability	.401 (.221)	.379 (.222)	.382 (.222)
Misbehavior	-.047 (.038)	-.045 (.038)	-.040 (.040)
English native lang.	.149 (.149)	.152 (.149)	.147 (.149)
Cuba, DR, PR	-.089 (.158)	-.081 (.158)	-.080 (.159)
Central / South Am.	.016 (.177)	.028 (.179)	.033 (.179)
Second generation	-.450** (.171)	-.439* (.171)	-.432* (.172)
Third generation	-.455* (.218)	-.416 (.219)	-.402 (.221)
<i>Extra-curricular</i>			
Sports		-.192 (.125)	-.197 (.125)
Other activities		.001 (.059)	-.005 (.060)
<i>Academics</i>			
Importance of good grades			.010 (.085)
Hours of homework <sup>a</sup>			.003 (.059)
GPA			.036 (.070)

<sup>a</sup>The log of this variable was used in all analyses.

\*p <.05, \*\*p <.01, \*\*\*p <.001

Source: NCES, ELS 2002

from the aggregate model. The log odds coefficient of 1.025 indicates that relative to students without a disability, Latino students with disabilities in urban schools were close to 300% more likely to feel put down by other students. By comparison, disability status was not significant for students at rural / suburban schools.

Overall, the main finding from the analysis of feeling put down by other students is that generational status seems to be more important than extra-curricular activities and academic factors. Compared to the analysis of bullying incidents, although being a third generation student mattered at rural / suburban schools, so did non-athletic activities and homework. Each predicted increased chances of reporting bullying incidents. When the focus changed to a more

gender-neutral, less violent way of being singled out or stigmatized, only generational status mattered; specifically it mattered because first generation students were more likely to have borne the brunt of that type of victimization.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study sought to uncover more information regarding bullying victimization among Latino students. Specifically, although the previous analysis in this dissertation suggested that bullying victimization was not related to Latino students' extra-curricular or academic activities, further steps were taken to examine Latino students as an ethnically and academically diverse group with complex immigrant histories (Crosnoe 2005; Bohon et al. 2006; Portes and Zhou 1993). In another examination of wave 1 of the ELS data, the primary method for doing so consisted of disaggregating Latino students between those who attended urban schools in 2002 and those who attended rural or suburban schools in 2002. Ethnicity and generation status were key control variables to be accounted for before examining the effects of extra-curricular activities and academic factors on bullying victimization.

It was hypothesized that there would be differences in the correlates of bullying victimization for students in urban schools compared to students in other (rural or suburban) schools. The analysis of bullying incidents gave clear support to this hypothesis. While there were few findings of note for students in urban schools, for students in rural / suburban schools increased chances of reporting bullying incidents were predicted by generational status, participation in non-athletic extra-curricular activities, and number of hours spent on homework. The fact that activities such as band, theater, chorus, etc. as well as time spent on homework predicted increased likelihood of victimization also lent support to the second and third

hypotheses. Those predictions were tied to the importance of attending rural / suburban schools which were used as approximations for communities that Latinos had not traditionally settled in at the time of the ELS data collection (Durand et al. 2000; Durand et al. 2005; Kochhar et al. 2005). Such findings gave more credibility to the possibility that Latino students who participate in those clubs and / or spend significant time on homework are seen as threatening or deviant in schools where Latinos have only recently begun to settle. When considering the significance of time spent on homework in other analyses in this dissertation, it also points to the possibility that there is more of a general stigma associated with students who devote significant time to homework.

Future research should examine the perpetrators of bullying targeted at Latino students to examine if a sense of threat is in fact part of the causal link between club participation / homework, and victimization. Although one cannot be sure of such a link based on the current research, the associations that were presented do suggest that at least in the rural / suburban context, Latino students are not immune from bullying based on club activities and time spent on homework. This is further support that such stigmatizations transcend racial / ethnic boundaries as suggested in the previous section of the dissertation.

Intersecting with the importance of traditional destinations compared to new ones was the relevance of generation status and type of bullying. For example, only third generation students who attended rural / suburban schools were more likely to report experiencing bullying incidents. The same could not be said for urban students who were potentially (though not necessarily exclusively) attending schools in areas with a longer history of a Latino population. Future research should explore the paradox of being from a family with established roots in the U.S. while also being a member of a minority group in a local area unfamiliar with that group.

Regardless of extra-curricular activities or academics, students in those contexts may be more likely to be labeled deviant and bullied.

When analyzing the extent to which students felt put down by fellow classmates, the trend reversed. Second and third generation students in urban schools were *less likely* to report being bullied or stigmatized in that way. This suggests that regardless of extra-curricular activities or academics, being a first generation student in urban schools is more likely to be viewed as deviant or stigmatized. If urban areas are more likely to have an established Latino population, Latino students who are new to U.S. teenagers' norms and culture may have a more difficult time fitting in (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez Orozco 2001; Lee 2009) and appear as susceptible targets for bullying.

At rural and suburban schools, only second generation students are less likely to feel put down by other students in class; controlling for extra-curricular activities and academics reduces the effect of being a third generation student to non-significance. Still, first generation students were still subject to the most putdowns regardless of their other activities in school. Comparing putdowns to bullying related to physical altercations, property victimization, and any other incident a student perceived as bullying enabled these difference between generation statuses to be documented. Olewus (2001) notes that there are many types of bullying, and all do not operate in the same manner. Putdowns would likely fall under the scope of verbal bullying as compared to bullying involving physical or property victimization. To reiterate, bullying often takes place in the context of status competitions among students within a school (Pellegrini and Bartini 2000; Milner 2004; Faris and Felmlee 2011; 2014). In terms of Latino students, the difference between bullying incidents, putdowns, and generational status is territory for future



research because depending on generational status, Latino students seem to be targeted in different ways as this status competition takes place.

Differences in victimization based on ethnicity were also observed. Across the entire sample, students with ethnic origins in Central and South America, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico were more likely to report bullying incidents compared to students with ethnic origins in Mexico. Among all Latinos in the U.S., those with Mexican heritage form the majority (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Examining if this status is salient for likelihood of victimization as well as potential interactions between ethnicity and immigrant generation may provide further clarification of this relationship in future research.

To conclude the discussion of the findings on a point of consistency across the analyses, Latino students with disabilities tended to report high increased chances of victimization. This was especially the case for Latino students in urban schools who felt put down by their classmates. As previous studies (Marini et al. 2001) and previous work in this dissertation have suggested, having a disability is a significant mark of stigma for students; Latino students appear to be no exception.

Despite these findings there are still shortcomings to be noted and improvements to be made in future research. First and foremost is the use of the urban and rural / suburban schools as a proxy for traditional and new destinations. In future research, the Census tract that a school is located in may be a more reliable indicator of the historical and current composition of the Latino population in a given area. Nonetheless, much of the theoretical interest in this study was centered on new destinations which rural and suburban areas do represent. With the exception of rural border areas along the U.S.-Mexico border, most other rural and suburban areas in the U.S.

have little history of Latino populations (Durand et al. 2000; Durand et al. 2005; Kochhar et al. 2005). On the other hand, urban schools may be less valid as an approximation of traditional destinations because as Latinos have migrated throughout the country in recent decades, many have settled in cities that had previously not hosted larger populations of Latinos. The data in this study were collected in 2002, so very recent migrations could be excluded from those concerns. Related to the importance of a more precise measurement of local and school context, other school-level factors should be taken into account. For example, through multilevel modeling in Chapter 3, many factors such as school disorder, school-SES, and school racial diversity were accounted for. Although not included with the ELS data, controlling for the proportion of Latino students within the school would also be an important factor to control for if available in future studies.

Also, related to the nature of the ELS data, the available data did not include some important factors that could have been controlled for when predicting students' likelihood of reporting bullying victimization. For example, LGBT status and obesity were not measured by ELS; thus they were not controlled for in this study despite previous research suggesting their association with bullying victimization (Janssen et al. 2004; Halpern et al. 2005; Birkett et al. 2009; Robinson and Espelage 2011). ELS also did not control for characteristics of students' social networks (Faris and Felmlee 2011) or students' structural position in popularity hierarchies (Faris and Felmlee 2014) which has been found to be related to the risk of bullying victimization. Further, this study's findings refer to a sample of 10<sup>th</sup> graders who are at a stage in school where bullying behavior tends to be in decline as high school social statuses are solidified and competition over status decreases (Pellegrini and Bartini 2000; Milner 2004). Therefore this study may only be capturing the tail-end of students' bullying victimization

experiences in school. Studies of younger students and students who have made a more recent transition from one school to another could be initiated under a similar framework as this study. Measures of bullying victimization were self-reported which also brings up the possibility that victimization may have been under or over-reported.

As social media continues to flourish in society, future bullying research should treat cyber-bullying victimization as an outcome as well. Conducted in 2002, the ELS study surveyed students who attended high school before the explosion of social media that occurred soon thereafter. Bullying can also include relational bullying such as spreading rumors and exclusion from social groups (Olweus 2001; Jordan and Austin 2012) however this type of bullying was not examined either. Previous bullying research notes that female students are more likely to be victims of relational bullying (Hoover et al. 1992; Whitney and Smith 1993; Jeffrey et al. 2001) which points out that at least in terms of the measure of bullying incidents, this study may have placed more of a focus on male students' perceived bullying victimization compared to female students'.

## **CONCLUSION**

Despite the limitations, the study presented here has advanced the understanding of Latino students' bullying victimization in several ways. First, there is evidence to suggest that differences in school location may be important mediators in victimization for this group of students. Second, the type of victimization also makes a difference when comparing first generation students to students from families with longer histories in the U.S. Third and finally, there is evidence that Latino students may be singled out, bullied, and / or stigmatized based on their membership in club activities and their amount of time spent on homework. Specifically,

second and third generation students in rural and suburban schools are at risk for victimization based on those factors.

In terms of schools in locations where Latinos are relative newcomers, the findings here suggest that teachers and administrators will need to have a greater awareness of the difficulties involved in being a minority in the context of status competition in adolescence. This also includes teachers, staff members, parents, etc. who may be involved in school-sponsored clubs or activities that may take place outside of the typical school day. Although Kinney (1993) suggested that participation in such activities could open students to new friendship groups and sources of status and support, the findings here indicate that participation is related to bullying victimization for Latino students in rural / suburban schools. If students are bullied on account of their membership in those groups, the need to avoid such stigma (Goffman 1963) may discourage students from further participation. This would detract from students' opportunities to have a diverse and well-rounded educational experience outside of the classroom which teachers, administrators, and parents should want to encourage.

In a similar sense, mostly anyone invested in students' educations would want to encourage homework rather than seeing it stigmatized by students' peers. The significant association between time spent on homework and bullying gives further credibility to observations of students' peer cultures which indicated that students have a sense of how much effort their peers exert towards academic achievement (Kinney 1993; Morris 2008). The preoccupation with peers' academic effort that may identify someone as a nerd seems to be common due to the significance that social status plays in high schools (Milner 2004). In addition, when considering that dedication to turning in assignments and otherwise being prepared for class generally results in improved academic performance, it is reasonable to expect

that students in the schools sampled by ELS would have some awareness of their peers' academic effort. To avoid stigma, Latino students trying to fit in at a school where their ethnic group may be viewed as abnormal may choose to spend less time on homework in the future. Wildhagen (2011), using the same data as this study, found evidence among White students that stigmatizations aimed at academic achievement hinder students' future achievement.

Finally, a greater awareness of the different types of bullying that can take place will help educators prevent further stigmatizations and victimizations. Although physical bullying and bullying related to theft of property / money is accepted as typical bullying behavior, acts of putting down other students in class may be debated as to whether or not they constitute bullying (Espelage and Swearer 2003). If students are routinely targeted in order to be subjected to a lower rung of the social hierarchy, this would fit Olweus' (1993; 2001) most widely accepted definition. The fact that such events may take place in class in direct proximity to teachers is significant because teachers may have the ability to enable or prevent such putdowns in the future. As has been the argument for this particular analysis, Latino students should not be overlooked as potential targets of that type of bullying.

## **CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS**

In this dissertation, three chapters were devoted to analyses of bullying victimization with respective focuses on gender differences in victimization, racial differences in victimization, and Latino students' victimization. All analyses employed survey and high school transcript data from the first wave of the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002. Students were sophomores in high school at the time of data collection. Each of the three analytical chapters reported notable findings related to the aforementioned research interests.

In Chapter 3, two interactions between gender and academics provided support for the expectation that male students are bullied in connection with signs that they may be intellectually oriented. Specifically, the combinations of being male and having a high GPA as well as being male and spending considerable hours on homework predicted increased chances of reporting being bullied. This was the case for three different measures of bullying victimization after controlling for many individual and school-level factors. Overall, the findings give more weight to the possibility that masculinity is not compatible with intellectualism in U.S. schools. The enforcement of hegemonic masculinity in schools through teasing and / or bullying has been observed previously (Pascoe 2007; Morris 2012) and now there is quantitative evidence to suggest that this may be a common phenomenon.

In Chapter 4, participation in non-athletic extra-curricular activities was included as a potential factor in preventing bullying victimization. Taking this variable into account provided evidence that the relationships between students' activities in school and bullying do not always vary by race. Although it was expected that participation in activities or clubs related to music,

journalism, theater, etc. would provide students with more social connections and support against potential bullies, the opposite seemed to be the case for Asian, African American, and white students. Latino students were the only group where participation in non-athletic extra-curricular activities was not associated with increased chances of reporting bullying victimization.

Considering recent research on bullying victimization using social network data could help to clarify the unexpected finding nonetheless. Faris and Felmlee (2014) note that popular students (with the exception of those at the very top of popularity hierarchies) experience bullying victimization even though one may assume that only “nerds” or less popular students are bullied. In terms of students who are involved in many club activities, the social status, popularity, and many social ties that accompany their membership may put students at risk for victimization.

In Chapter 5, disaggregating analyses of bullying victimization among Latino students in urban schools compared to Latino students in rural or suburban schools justified the decision to examine Latino students’ bullying victimization more closely. After little was learned about Latino students in the previous chapter, the analyses in Chapter 5 indicated that generation status, extra-curricular activities, and time spent on homework were significant predictors of bullying victimization for some students. Specifically, those findings applied to bullying incidents reported by Latino students at rural / suburban schools. Like Asian, African American, and white students, this subgroup also experienced bullying victimization in connection with their participation in club / school-sponsored activities. It is possible that Latino students in these schools are seen as greater threats to popularity hierarchies (Faris and Felmlee 2014) if they participate in those activities. Similarly, third-generation students may be more integrated into peer social networks with more exposure to bullying. The association between time spent on homework and bullying which is significant above and beyond the effects of generation status

and activities also suggests that this group of students is more similar to students from more established racial / ethnic groups; the association between homework and bullying was the most consistent across the three analytical chapters.

In contrast, when measuring students' reports of feeling put down by classmates, first generation students were more likely to experience that form of stigmatization compared to other students. This is evidence of verbal bullying operating differently than the bullying incidents which were much more physical in nature. Male students were more likely to be victimized by those incidents than female students in Chapter 5, but the same difference did not apply to the verbal putdowns. This may lend more insight into the difference between generational status and type of bullying. If gender is not a factor in putdowns, it may be that first-generation students have less cultural knowledge about U.S. youth customs which would make them more likely to be singled out by others as deviant. They would be picked on or teased due to a lack of cultural knowledge. On the other hand, one must be reminded that the measure was of *reported* putdowns; thus it is possible that first-generation students with less cultural knowledge about U.S. customs may be misinterpreting friendly joking as verbal attacks.

An important aspect in the results of each of the three analytical chapters included the effects of academic attitudes, effort, and achievement. In the instances where attitudes (measured through students' agreement about the importance of good grades) were significant, they predicted decreased chances of victimization. Those results suggest that pro-academic attitudes are not stigmatized or viewed as deviant by various youth cultures in U.S. schools. Instead, like many studies on minority students' attitudes have pointed out (Kao and Tienda 1998; Kao and Thompson 2003), students in general seem to agree with the value of good grades



and do not devalue the status of peers who hold such beliefs (Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey 1998).

In terms of GPA, the interaction of being male and having a high GPA in Chapter 3 was notable when considering that before the interaction terms were included, GPA predicted a decreased chance of victimization (for both male and female students). The importance of accounting for the interaction between achievement and gender may be related to the non-significant findings for GPA in the other analyses. Though the effect of gender on victimization was controlled for in Chapters 4 and 5, interactions between gender and academics were not included because race and / or ethnicity were the primary research interests. Whereas having a high GPA for female students may be a socially acceptable performance of femininity and an indicator of obedience to teachers and their expectations (Mickelson 1989; Morris 2011), male students who are expected to be much more rambunctious and active may be picked on and / or bullied when their most salient characteristic is perceived intelligence. Having a reputation as “smart” or a “nerd” would be far less masculine than a reputation as a “jock,” “flirt,” or even a “class clown.” Future studies focused on the intersection of race / ethnicity, gender, and academic reputations could include academic\*gender interactions to examine if findings similar to Chapter 3 would exist in analyses disaggregated by race / ethnicity.

In terms of hours spent on homework, this measure of intellectualism was the most consistent predictor of increased chances of experiencing various kinds of bullying victimization and / or stigmatization. In Chapters 3, 4, and 5, various explanations for these findings were given. For Chapter 3 with the focus on gender, it was suggested that being studious was another marker of lacking traditional masculinity. In Chapter 4, when considering that homework predicted increased reports of bullying incidents for several different race groups, it suggested

the possibility of a general stigma against being studious in contrast to oppositional cultures limited to one racial / ethnic group. Chapter 5 considered the possibility that Latino students in new destinations who spend the most time on homework may be perceived as threatening and bullied accordingly. After considering the consistency of the effect of time spent on homework, it seems that the second explanation would be the most likely. It can also be argued that spending time on homework is also socially visible; doing homework in class or study halls while other students are socializing and superior performance in the classroom would be noticed by peers who of course are jockeying for status on a day to day basis.

This interpretation should still be viewed with caution however. Top students may indeed be very studious however students who struggle with school may also spend more hours than the average student if the work is very difficult for them. In other words, students who struggle with homework and need to spend extra time on it may be stigmatized or bullied. Similarly, highly privileged students may be able to attain a high GPA with much less studying. Teasing out those different possibilities should be another goal of future research. Considering the complexities of these various mechanisms yet to be explored also suggests ways in which the present research can be improved in the future.

## **SHORTCOMINGS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

In addition to the shortcomings of each analysis that were discussed in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 there are other noteworthy caveats to the research presented in this dissertation. For example, the analyses presented are only cross-sectional and thus do not indicate causal relationships between academics and bullying or extra-curricular activities and bullying. Although the ELS data do not contain measures of bullying victimization in the second wave (senior year of high

school), future longitudinal studies should include measurements of bullying at multiple points in time during students' path through the educational system. On a related note, bullying victimization in the present research was measured at sophomore year in high school. However, as students grow older, identities and positions in school hierarchies tend to solidify; thus the importance of status competitions accompanied by bullying tend to weaken (Pellegrini and Bartini 2000; Espelage and Swearer 2003; Milner 2004; Faris and Felmlee 2011). This suggests that in this dissertation, only the tail end of students' experiences of bullying victimization may have been captured. Future longitudinal studies could measure bullying victimization as early as elementary or middle school and continue with repeated measurements over time.

Related to the nature of survey data, one must be mindful of the reliability of respondents' answers, particularly with a sensitive topic such as being bullied. Faris and Felmlee (2011; 2014) addressed this issue by collecting social network data rather than simply asking survey questions. Their findings suggest that bullying victimization is much more prevalent than the ELS data would indicate. Therefore, asking students to name specific aggressors and victims may be a more effective strategy in measuring who is being bullied and who is a bully. On the other hand, there is still a degree of self-reporting in those data as well.

More particularly, there are important limitations that have been discussed in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. For example, there are no specific measurements of masculinity in the ELS data. Nonetheless, the potential incompatibility between academics and masculinity was discussed extensively. Both quantitative and qualitative research in the future should directly address conceptions of masculinity among students and potential connections to bullying victimization. In addition, future research can utilize the ELS data to examine the extent to which gender and non-athletic extra-curricular activities are related to students' bullying victimization.

In terms of the analyses disaggregated by race in Chapter 4, using fixed effects regressions ruled out school-level influences from the model which allowed the focus to remain on academic and extra-curricular predictors of bullying victimization. Nonetheless, the effects of particular school-level factors such as racial diversity, school-SES, school location, etc. were unknown. In order to include measures of those factors in a multilevel regression model, more students nested within schools would be necessary. Peguero and Williams (2011) accomplished a multilevel analysis of bullying victimization for several difference racial / ethnic groups by using interaction terms between race group and factors such as athletic participation and standardized test scores. With this method, the more groups to be analyzed, the more interaction terms are needed; thus the question of whether this is a parsimonious regression model can be brought forth. In terms of future research beyond the present dissertation, since hours spent on homework and non-athletic extra-curricular activities seem to be key factors, interaction terms could be limited to race multiplied by those factors.

Finally, the validity of using urban schools and rural / suburban schools to approximate traditional and new Latino destinations in Chapter 5 is only a preliminary attempt at studying how location may mediate Latino students' bullying victimization. Future research can incorporate the Common Core of Data county codes that can be linked to students' schools through the ELS data. Specific counties can then be listed as traditional or new destinations based on recent migration and demographic trends. In addition, immigrant generation status, extra-curricular activities, and academics will continue to be important factors in this line of research. For example, interactions between students' generation status and their academic and / or extra-curricular activities may provide further insight into why first generation students may be more likely to be verbally bullied but less likely to be physically bullied.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Overall, the findings presented in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 have nonetheless made several contributions to the sociological research of bullying victimization. Chapter 3 provided further evidence that both individual-level and school-level factors matter when it comes to students' day to day experiences including bullying victimization. Chapter 3 also used several different measures of bullying victimization and / or stigmatization whereas physical or property victimizations had dominated most sociological research on bullying using ELS data (Peguero 2009; Peguero and Williams 2011; Peguero 2013). For physical victimizations, putdowns, or simply being "bullied" as defined by the student, male students who had high GPAs and spent large amounts of time on homework were more likely to be victimized in each of those ways.

Chapter 4 added the contribution that bullying victimization related to academics and extra-curricular activities is not limited to African American students. The study from Chapter 4 adds to the tradition of research (Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey 1998; Farkas et al. 2002; Darnell and Ainsworth-Downey 2002; Wildhagen 2011) testing Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) "acting white" thesis. The analyses showed that the sanctioning of students engaging in academically enriching activities affects several different racial and ethnic groups including academically privileged groups such as Asian and white students. This is not to say that status as an involuntary minority (Ogbu 1987; 1991) is no longer relevant, but it does point to the possibility that there is a more general practice among students of targeting peers who are looking to succeed in school.

Finally, Chapter 5 provides preliminary evidence that school location is an important mediator in Latino students' bullying victimization. This may be true above and beyond

generational status (Peguero 2009). Further, the type of bullying may also matter in terms of generational status. This is similar to the contribution of Chapter 3 where multiple measures of bullying victimization were used. Related to Chapter 4 is the importance of examining various racial and ethnic groups by themselves instead of aggregating them into one sample. Without factors specific to Latino students such as ethnic origin and generational status being considered, the analysis in Chapter 4 did not produce any findings of interest related to academics or extra-curricular activities. In Chapter 5 however, a more nuanced focus on Latinos and their diverse experiences was able to justify more specific variables to account for which were related to the novel results of the analysis.

Based on these contributions and findings, there are several implications that students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and policy-makers should take seriously. Sociologically, they can be categorized into individual-level, interactional level, and macro-level suggestions on how to prevent the many harmful consequences of bullying victimization that have been reviewed periodically in this dissertation. First, it is important to continue raising awareness of bullying in U.S. schools. However, that directs most of the pressure on to students and parents to simply stop the behavior. It is an individual-level solution for a social problem that is recognized as a public issue. As this dissertation and the rest of the scholarship on bullying shows, it is a phenomenon that takes place both interactionally and is also influenced by the structure of schools.

Focusing on bullying as an interactional phenomenon recognizes both the nature of social networks within schools as well as the stigmatizing effect that victimization can have on one's looking glass self. Both are significant in terms of the negotiation of status hierarchies mentioned in social psychological and sociological bullying research (Pellegrini and Bartini

2000; Faris and Felmlee 2011; 2014). This is related to earlier calls in this dissertation to raise the social status of intellectually oriented students and students who participate in many school-sponsored activities and clubs. Students who fall into these categories are likely to move on to college and future success, but some may also curb their intellectual curiosity and / or participation in various culturally enriching groups. Wildhagen (2011) as well as Williams and Peguero (2013) have found that bullying victimization can lead to decreased academic performance. Thus, bullying has been tied to consequences for individual students as well as potential consequences for academic achievement in the U.S. in general. Particular attention should be paid to bullying victimization and male students' achievement when remembering the findings from Chapter 3. Male students are already showing signs of educational trouble in terms of achievement and high education attainment (Buchmann et al. 2008; Morris 2011).

In terms of encouraging peer groups to confer increased social status on to intellectually oriented students and members of many cultural activities / clubs, it is not enough to simply tell students that their peers who meet those attributes should be more popular. Again, that would only be an individual solution to modifying the symbolic and interactional nature of peer social status. Reminding the student body that the most successful students have the best chance to gain high social status as adults may be way to confer more social status on "nerds" for example. Another way to elevate those students' statuses would be to create new kinds of rewards instead of honor-roll or honors societies. The rewards should be related to something that at least a majority of students (even those who aren't academically oriented) would desire. Conferring those rewards onto only the best students would still stratify students; however in this scenario, the best students would be at the top of the hierarchy. For example, only students with a certain GPA would be allowed to leave the school grounds for lunch. This may be especially effective

for students seeking to be upwardly mobile who could be distracted or discouraged by bullying from peers in similarly low social classes.

Social mobility also brings up the importance of the school. It is well understood that characteristics of students' schools such as socioeconomic status, student-teacher ratio, public vs. private, etc. influence students' chances for graduating high school and going to college. As the present research and many other studies have shown, the same can be said for students' chances of experiencing bullying victimization. Policies aimed at reducing bullying victimization should also think structurally as well then. Milner (2004) for example recommends that limiting status symbols through school uniforms and de-emphasizing traditionally dominant sports at schools would reduce some of the axes of status that peer hierarchies currently operate under. This strategy suggests that limiting ways that students can be differentiated is important. Based on the importance of factors discussed in this dissertation such as gender, race, disability status, social class, status as an athlete, one has ample evidence to suggest that markers of difference are related to bullying victimization. One thing that students have in common within the school walls is that the school is supposed to provide them with education and skills for their futures. If schools seek to remind students of that commonality, there could be less of a focus on social differences. In other words, elementary, middle, and high schools should promote themselves as communities of learners. If everyone in the community is valuable and part of the larger goal, students may not focus on the differences between them as much as is currently observed.



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## **APPENDIX: DISCUSSION OF ELS DATA COLLECTION**

To begin the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002, the National Center for Education Statistics collected a random sample of 750 U.S. schools. One of the goals of the project was to provide extensive contextual-level information about schools and how they may impact students' educational experiences. Thus, administrators such as principals and librarians were included as part of the data collection process. The present research in this dissertation benefitted from that choice through the ability to employ a measure based on principals' estimations of how serious of a problem bullying was at their school. The NCES oversampled private schools as well in order that comparisons between private and public schools could be made. The NCES also linked the Common Core of Data to data for each school so that a diverse array of local factors could be accounted for in future research using the ELS data.

After the 750 schools were sampled, random samples of students from within each school were selected. Another goal of the project was to include racially diverse groups of students in the data collection so that statistical comparisons between groups could be made. Thus students from many Asian and Latino ethnic backgrounds were oversampled. ELS provided sampling weights to account for the stratified and biased nature of the sampling design; those weights were incorporated into all analyses for the present dissertation.

After the student sample was determined, those students participated in an extensive questionnaire in the Spring of 2002 when they were sophomores in high school. About 16,000 students participated in this questionnaire. Students' responses to the survey questions were linked to data for their schools, principals' surveys, and a separate parent questionnaire. This data collection regarding students, their schools, families, and local communities constituted the base-year data for the ELS project. Although the present dissertation only made use of the base-

year data, the ELS project also conducted follow-up surveys in 2004, 2006, and 2012. Students' high school transcript data was also linked to their base-year data in subsequent years of the project. Community data and transcript data are not public use data however this dissertation did make use of restricted data in terms of students' high school transcript GPA.

Future research beyond the current dissertation can make use of these follow up waves which include data collected during students' senior year in high school, when the typical student was in her / his early 20s, and when the typical student would have been in her / his mid-20s. Presumably, the student participants would have experienced many diverse outcomes throughout their life course in terms of educational attainment, occupational attainment, military service, and family formation. Any of these outcomes are now available in the most recently released (2012) data.

## **THE VITA**

Brett Lehman received a B.A. in Sociology and Political Science from Albright College in 2008. At Louisiana State University, he served as a Graduate Assistant, Research Assistant, and a Sociology Instructor in the Department of Sociology. Starting in the Fall of 2014, he will join the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at North Carolina State University as a Postdoctoral Teaching Scholar in Sociology.