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NOTES ON A SOCIOLOGY OF BULLYING

Young Men's Homophobia as Gender Socialization

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When I started researching adolescent masculinity over a decade ago, it didn't occur to me that I would end up writing a book, *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*, that was, in essence, about bullying.[1] This book investigates how American young people understand, enact, and resist contemporary definitions of masculinity. During a year and a half of researching young peoples' understandings and practices of masculinity at a working-class high school, River High, in Northern California, I watched as boys came to think of themselves and others as acceptably masculine largely through the homophobic harassment of other boys and through sexual harassment of girls. In other words, I found that a large part of what constituted adolescent masculinity were practices that looked a lot like bullying. Curiously, however, in the resulting text I only refer to the concept of bullying three times.

Looking back from the vantage point of 2013, this seems strange. Mentions of bullying in the *New York Times* increased from 160 in 2000 to 6,730 by 2012.[2] The White House now hosts summits and runs a Web site about bullying. Driven by reports of youth cruelty, Lady Gaga started a foundation to promote kindness and resiliency, the Born This Way Foundation. In response to a seeming epidemic of homophobic bullying, the It Gets Better Project targets inspirational videos at GLBTQ youth.[3] A critically acclaimed documentary, *Bully*, depicts the devastating outcomes of bullying for victimized young people. One author even claims that we live in a society that is characterized by bullying, a veritable "bully society."[4]

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It is true that over the past several years we have heard too many tragic stories of young people taking their lives due to bullying, specifically homophobic bullying. Tyler Clementi, Eric Mohat, Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover, Jaheem Herrera, Billy Lucas, Jadin Bell, among myriad nameless others, left this world by their own hands, unable to bear the homophobic bullying of which they were targets. They suffered this form of harassment regardless of their own self-identification as gay or straight.[5] Their stories have become rallying cries for ending homophobia and homophobic bullying.

Even the most cursory statistics indicate that homophobic bullying is a problem. Nationally, 93 percent of youth hear homophobic slurs occasionally; 51 percent hear them on a daily basis.[6] Evidence overwhelmingly indicates that this form of harassment is gendered—homophobic language and attitudes are disproportionately deployed by boys.[7] Indeed, straight boys are often the recipients of these slurs.[8] Boys use these epithets more than girls and rate them much more seriously.[9] Perhaps not surprisingly, 90 percent of random school shootings have involved straight-identified boys who have been relentlessly humiliated with homophobic remarks.[10] These statistics are not incidental. They indicate that homophobia and homophobic language are central to shaping contemporary heterosexual masculine identities.[11] That is, it is not just gay kids who are bullied because they are gay; rather, this sort of homophobic bullying is a part of boys' gender socialization into normatively masculine behaviors, practices, attitudes, and dispositions.[12] In other words, it is through this kind of homophobic behavior that boys learn what it is to "be a boy."

Understanding homophobic bullying as a part of boys' gender socialization processes suggests that the current discourse about bullying needs some reworking. Framing young men's aggressive behavior solely as "bullying" can elide the complicated way in which their aggressive interactions are a central part of a gender socialization process that supports and reproduces gender and sexual inequality. Looking at bullying as the interactional reproduction of larger structural inequalities indicates that current popular and academic discourses about bullying might be missing some important elements, resulting in responses to bullying that are largely individualistic and symbolic rather than structural and systemic.

This article suggests that paying critical attention to inequality might best be accomplished through the development of a *sociology of bullying*. A sociology of bullying would frame these aggressive interactions not necessarily as the product of pathological individuals who are ill-adjusted socially, but as the interactional reproduction of larger structural inequalities. A sociology of bullying would shift the unit of analysis from the individual to the aggressive interaction itself, attend to the social contexts in which bullying occurs, ask questions about meanings produced by such interactions, and understand these interactions as not solely the province of young people. In doing so it would account for social forces, institutionalized inequality, and cultural norms that reproduce inequality. Using young men's homophobic interactions as a particular case study, this article will trace the current academic discussion of bullying, examine the meaning-making processes in young men's homophobic bullying, and outline a sociology of bullying. All of this might expand the current discussion of bullying, not just in terms of gender and sexuality, but along other lines of inequality as well, such as body size, race, and class.

FRAMING BULLYING

Current popular and academic understandings of bullying, its causes, definitions, participants, effects, and solutions are largely framed by psychological research. The literature rests on a narrow definition that limits the sort of aggressive interactions that count as bullying. It is largely focused on individual-level variables pertaining to aggressors, victims, and the causes and effects of bullying.

Much of the bullying scholarship has been influenced by scholar Dan Olweus's definition.[13] This definition rests on three characteristics—intentionality on the part of the aggressor, a power imbalance

between the aggressor and victim, and the repetition of the aggressive interactions.[14] However, legally,[15] colloquially, and in terms of public policy, the meaning of "bullying" often varies.[16] In addition, scholars point out that young people often understand bullying differently than adults.[17] Other scholars have suggested that there are forms of bullying—direct, verbal, physical, verbal and sexual harassment, for instance[18]—not taken into account by Olweus's definition. In the absence of a universal characterization as well as the limitations imposed by Olweus's definition, scholars are calling for improving and refining understandings of bullying because it is "a disadvantage to organize a field around a concept whose definition is so difficult to pin point."[19]

Given the difficulty defining the subject,[20] it is hard to provide exact figures on its prevalence. Reported rates of bullying vary from 10–35 percent to 70 percent of young people.[21] Although Internet bullying seems to have increased in the 2000s, bullying in general seems to have been on the decline since 1992.[22]

Young people get bullied for a variety of reasons. The most common trigger for bullying is the victim's appearance,[23] frequently in terms of body size. Young people who qualify as obese are more likely to experience bullying from peers, family, and teachers.[24] Other frequent victims of bullying are GLBTQ youth and youth with disabilities.[25]

Long-term negative outcomes are associated with bullying and victimization.[26] Bullying is related to anti-social development and elevated rates of psychiatric disorders in adulthood.[27] Victims might have increased aggression later in life and are at greater risk for suicidal thoughts or behavior.[28] Bullying based in personal bias seems to have a more negative impact than other forms of bullying.[29]

Bullying behaviors are related to age, class, peer group, emotional state, gender, and self-esteem.[30] Bullying practices vary by age, peaking during middle-school years, then decreasing with age.[31] Group norms and individual attitudes also influence bullying-related behaviors.[32] Bullies are often popular, high-status individuals who are school leaders, especially in early adolescence.[33] That said, bullies come from a range of social groups in school settings.[34] Their social standing is related to the type of bullying in which they engage.[35]

Findings on the emotional states of bullies and victims are mixed. Although Nansel et al. argue that poorer psychosocial adjustment characterizes bullies and Seals and Young make the case that higher levels of depression are found in both bullies and victims,[36] others argue that bullies often do not have low self-esteem but feel good about themselves and their interactions with peers.[37] This contradicts popular understandings of bullies as suffering from low self-image.[38]

There are marked gender differences in bullying practices.[39] Simply put, boys bully more than girls in both on- and offline environments.[40] They are also more often the victims of bullying than are girls.[41] Boys are more likely to engage in physical and verbal types of bullying.[42] Yet, perhaps contrary to some of the claims made about the gendering of "relational aggression,"[43] evidence indicates that girls do physically intimidate others and that boys also spread rumors.[44]

Looking at boys' participation in homophobic bullying builds on and challenges some of these framings of bullying as located in individual traits and as constituted by categorical differences. Rather, analyzing bullying as part of a gender socialization process suggests that these interactional practices may be as tied to structural inequalities, and gendered and sexualized meaning-making processes as they are to individual-level variables.

HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING

When looking at young men's understandings and enactments of masculinity, it becomes increasingly clear that behaviors that look an awful lot like bullying are a central part of their socialization process. Scholars of masculinity have pointed out that homophobia is central to how boys come to think of themselves as men.[45] Indeed, bullying is part a rite of passage for many boys. As such, their homophobia is a distinctly gendered homophobia.

To call their interactions homophobic bullying without paying attention to their gendered content obfuscates the way in which this sexuality-related bullying works as a socialization process for contemporary American boys.

Young men's homophobic practices often take the form of a "fag discourse" consisting of jokes,[46] taunts, imitations, and threats through which boys publicly signal their rejection of that which is considered unmasculine. In other words, homophobic harassment has as much to do with definitions of masculinity as it does with fear of gay men.[47] These insults are levied against boys who are not masculine, if only momentarily, *and* boys who identify as gay.[48] Interactions like this set up a complicated daily ordeal in which boys continually strive to avoid being subject to epithets, but are constantly vulnerable to them. But, as I found, looking at the individual characteristics of boys engaging in this practice fails to yield significant insights about bullying, because it is the practice, rather than the individual, to which we ought to be paying more attention.

In talking to young men at River High about their use of the word, they repeatedly tell me that "fag" is the ultimate insult for a boy. One high school student, Darnell, stated, "Since you were little boys you've been told, 'hey, don't be a little faggot.'" Another, Jeremy, told me that this insult literally reduced a boy to nothing, "To call someone gay or fag is like the lowest thing you can call someone. Because that's like saying that you're nothing." Many boys explained their frequent use of epithets like "queer," "gay," and "fag" by asserting that, as Keith put it, "guys are just homophobic." However, boys make clear that this homophobia is as much about failing at tasks of masculinity as it is about fear of actual gay men. As J. L. said, "Fag, seriously, it has nothing to do with sexual preference at all. You could just be calling somebody an idiot, you know?" As one young man succinctly wrote on Twitter, "a faggot isn't gay; its someone who acts like a woman." Homophobia becomes a catch-all for anything that can be framed—even in an instant—as unmasculine.

In asserting the primacy of gender to the definition of these homophobic insults, boys reflect what Riki Wilchins calls the Eminem Exception,[49] in which Eminem explains that he doesn't call people "faggot" because of their sexual orientation, but because they are weak and unmanly. Although it is not necessarily acceptable to be gay, if a man were gay *and* masculine, he would not deserve the label. Whether or not these boys are actually homophobic is rendered moot by this definition.[50] What previous scholarship has largely ignored is that boys' homophobic taunting simultaneously has everything and nothing to do with boys' sexual identities. What is significant here is that these homophobic epithets play a central role in boys' gender socialization processes.

What renders a boy vulnerable to the epithet often depends on local definitions of masculinity. Being subject to homophobic harassment has as much to do with failing at masculine tasks of competence, heterosexual prowess, or revealing weakness as it does with a sexual identity. Boys have told me that seeming "too happy or something," "turning a wrench the wrong way," or serenading one's girlfriend could all render them vulnerable to homophobic epithets.[51]

The complicated way boys use these insults require a rethinking of the way current discussions of bullying are framed. That is, homophobic bullying is not just about punishing gay people for their sexual desire and practices, it also is a normative part of the gendered interactional practices through which young men become masculine.

The more aggressive forms of this "fag discourse" are easy to recognize. They often mirror Olweus's definition of bullying.[52] When Ricky, a gender transgressive and gay high school student at River High was relentlessly harassed by more popular, heterosexual, gender normative male students it is easily recognizable as bullying. When he attended a football game and his classmates yelled things like "there's that fucking fag" or threatened to beat him up, that is clearly bullying.[53] Acknowledging and addressing this kind of overt bullying is critically important.

Yet, much of what constitutes homophobia in young men's relationships is much less easily recognizable as bullying. Analyzing boys' homophobia as a form of gender socialization, rather than an individual psychological disposition, requires attending to the role of humor in these interactions, the way in which these interactions are not just the province of young people, and the way unequal power relationships are produced by the aggressive interactions themselves. To do otherwise fails to account for what is likely the vast majority of bullying.

Take the famous "know how I know you are gay?" scene from the movie *The 40-Year-Old Virgin,* for instance. In it, two straight friends tease each other by alternately asking and answering the question "know how I know you're gay?" while sitting next to each other in easy chairs playing a violent videogame in which, at one point, one player rips off the other player's head. The answers they provide include listening to Coldplay, Celine Dion, Miami Sound Machine, or public radio; wearing macramé shorts, white ties, suits, vests, v-necked sweaters; making spinach dip in sourdough bowls; watching particular television shows; driving particular cars; not having sex; wearing false teeth; and trimming one's beard. Only a minority of answers—having sex with men, giving blow jobs, having a "ball rest" on one's face—have to do with sexual desire and practices. Cleary, neither thinks the other is actually gay, because both have established themselves as straight throughout the rest of the film. Indeed, these characters behave much like the boys at River High who say they deploy homophobic epithets not because someone else is gay, but because the other person is unmanly.[54] A masculine man does not prepare particular foods, listen to particular music, wear particular clothes, drive particular cars, and certainly doesn't sleep with other men.

This scene highlights the centrality of humor in young men's gender socialization processes. Sociologists have pointed out that joking is central to men's relationships in general.[55] In a variety of settings, men manage their anxiety concerning emotional intimacy or other unmasculine practices and cement friendship bonds with one another through joking.[56] Yet, research has also shown that joking plays a critical and pernicious role in identifying outsiders in a group and in the reproduction of social inequalities.[57] Indeed, much of the homophobic bullying that goes on among young people happens between friends,[58] in a seemingly joking way. Joking, however, does not make the messages about masculinity any less serious.

This scene also illustrates the way in which homophobic bullying does not necessarily take place in a static power relationship between high- and low-status young men. Rather, the insult can move from one boy to another quickly, often between friends.[59] Indeed, it indicates the way in which the power imbalance that the common definition of bullying requires is actually *constituted in and by the interaction itself.* Part of what happens in these aggressive joking interactions is a struggle for dominance such that a power imbalance is created through the deployment of insults, regardless of the status the participants held when they entered the interaction. In other words, young men gain social status by using humor as an interactional resource.[60]

Finally, this scene indicates that the sort of homophobic interactions where the goal is to emasculate one's "opponent," either jokingly or not, are not the sole province of youth. Though it might not be clear from much of the research on bullying or male homophobia, both of these behaviors are found in the adult world as well. Take, for instance, the Arizona school principal who used homophobic humiliation to punish two boys for fighting, by making them sit in front of the school holding hands.[61] Or observe the photograph taken by members of the U.S. military who scrawled "High Jack this Fags [sic]" on a bomb to be dropped over Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom.[62] Homophobia is a feature of adult masculinity as well.[63]

These examples of young men's homophobic interactions necessitate expanding current popular and academic discussions on bullying.

Homophobic interactions occur between boys of varying backgrounds and statuses. They also take place between intimate friends. Humor is a central ingredient of these interactions. These interactions are in no way limited to young people. They have gendered meanings as well as sexual meanings. However, the messages about gender socialization embedded within these interactions are often lost in larger discussions about homophobic bullying, which position these interactions as pathological, rather than a normative part of boys' gender socialization.

A SOCIOLOGY OF BULLYING

Reframing boys' homophobic bullying as a "fag discourse" indicates that homophobic bullying—rather than stemming from emotional distress,[64] bad home lives, a lack of education, or deep disdain for same-sex desire, etc.—is a normative part of boys' gender socialization processes. This suggests that, as Finkelhor, Turner, and Hamby argue,[65] the current conversation about bullying needs some attention. A sociology of bullying indicates that these sort of aggressive interchanges function as interactional reproductions of structural inequalities. Much as the frame of homophobia has been criticized for being a simplistic "psychologized" understanding of a complex social process,[66] so too is bullying an individualist understanding of a complicated and sometimes contradictory social phenomenon.

STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES

A sociology of bullying would first address the sort of things for which kids get bullied. Simply put, kids get bullied for being different. But these differences are not neutral. They often reflect larger structural inequalities. When boys are engaging in homophobic bullying they are teaching each other a lesson about what it means to be masculine in a way that reflects legal and cultural disparities. When people who are gender variant are not protected in 44 states,[67] this bullying doesn't seem so divorced from the adult world. When discourses of masculinity are used to insult opponents in political races,[68] it is clear that boys' gender-based aggression reflects concerns in which adults seem deeply invested as well. Indeed, when people in same-sex relationships are discriminated against at the federal level and when young people do not learn about gender variation and nonheterosexual identities in school it is hardly surprising that they interact this way.

When bullying is framed as an interactional reproduction of social inequality, a picture emerges wherein young people can be seen as doing the dirty work of social reproduction, socializing each other into accepting inequality. In many ways, this is a much more complicated and serious issue than framing their behavior as teasing one another for neutral, random, isolated, or undesirable forms of difference. Thinking of these aggressive interactions as the reproduction of inequality frames them as *normative* rather than *pathological* behaviors. And when considered in this light, a sociology of bullying illustrates that the problem is larger and more complex than pathological models have made it appear.

This reframing also necessitates that young people are taken seriously as social actors. If they are doing the dirty work of social reproduction, then their behavior cannot be dismissed as youthful bad decision making or rendered marginal by the word "bullying." As sociologists of youth point out, we often don't take young people seriously as actors in their own social worlds, but instead frame them as beings in the process of becoming actual people.[69] The deployment of the word "bullying"[70] is part of the process of infantilizing and delegitimizing youth as full-fledged social actors; it minimizes these interactions, allowing adults to be blind to the way in which bullying often reflects, reproduces, and prepares young people

to accept inequalities embedded in larger social structures.

INTERACTIONS, NOT IDENTITIES

Currently, most research on bullying focuses on individuals. Who is likely to bully? Who is likely to be bullied? My research on adolescent masculinity suggests that *interactions* might be an equally useful unit of analysis. That is, instead of looking at the *type* of boy who engages in a "fag discourse," research will be more productive when it simultaneously considers what bullying interactions look like, when they occur, where they occur, what actors are involved, and what social meanings are embedded in them. In addition to looking at individual-level variables that might predict aggressors and victims, researchers ought to consider the interaction as a unit of analysis, which would reveal bullying as a dynamic behavior that does not always have a static victim or aggressor. Indeed, that the two can switch place—even within a single interaction—is evidence enough that trait-based research can only take us so far.

This becomes important in discussions about bullying and violence like the one that followed the Columbine shootings, in which some analysts claimed that the shooters were bullied, whereas others claimed that they *were* bullies.[71] Prioritizing the interaction over the individual renders this discussion unimportant; instead, it enables analysts to understand how aggressive interactions were an important part of the social world at this particular school. Both sides argued past one another because each relied on a conceptualization of bullying that conceives of "the bullies" and "the bullied" as two discrete groups. Focusing on the interactions, rather than individuals, enables us to understand how both sides may have been right and refocuses the discussion on solutions.

Although popular stories about bullying often show aggressive, indeed scary, forms of youth aggression, these messages about masculinity frequently appear in seemingly friendly interactions among boys and young men. If we start to think about these sorts of interactions as things that also happen within *friendships* we can begin to understand how they are not just individual, but collective and ritualized. That is, homophobic bullying is not just about one kid beating up on another, but something that boys do together.[72] In fact, it is the interaction itself that can produce the relational power imbalance. However, that status inequality is continually up for grabs in the next interaction. So, although the word "bully" intimates that there is something psychologically wrong with the individual doing the bullying, bullying is better understood when these boys are seen as acting out structural and cultural inequalities in their interactions.

RETHINKING BULLYING

So, why didn't I specifically address bullying in a book focused on young men's gender-based homophobic interactions? The answer is that I was too focused on the reproduction of inequality, something that is not taken into account by current popular and academic discourses on bullying. Thinking about bullying as something that goes on in boys' friendships, not just between enemies, calls into question the dominant framing of bullying as something that happens when one individual targets another. Looking at bullying in this way suggests that it is not necessarily about an individual pathology (though, of course, it certainly can be), but also be about shoring up definitions of masculinity. To take into account this sort of social phenomena, the current discussion of bullying needs to be expanded and reframed. This article suggests that developing a sociological approach to bullying will refocus this discussion on the aggressive interactions between peers while relating them to larger issues of inequality.[73]

A sociology of bullying would look at a range of aggressive social behaviors. This approach would

take seriously Finkelhor et al.'s call to examine a range of violative behaviors[74]—property offensives, violence, sexual victimization, psychological, or emotional victimization—and the relationship contexts in which these violations take place. In addition, there would be an examination of structural and cultural inequality. In doing so, a sociology of bullying could reframe issues like sexist interactions, racist comments, and weight-based shaming as forms of interactional reproductions of structural and cultural inequalities. Some scholars have already begun to move in this intellectual direction. Nan Stein reframed sexual harassment as a form of bullying.[75] Elizabeth Meyer linked both sexism and homophobia to bullying behaviors.[76] Hoover and Olson have done the same with teasing in general.[77] Rather than see these aggressive interactions as "motivated by bias" or the province of one's psychological disposition, a sociology of bullying would position them as interactional reproduction of larger racial, embodied, and gendered inequalities. What might well happen through the development of a sociology of bullying is a rendering of the actual term "bully" as irrelevant by indicating that it is artificially separating some aggressive interactions from others.[78]

This shift in focus would suggest different solutions to the problem of bullying than are currently being offered. Rather than zero-tolerance policies, psychological counseling, or individual-level solutions, the new focus would reflect the practices and goals of organizations like Gender JUST, the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, and Queers for Economic Justice. These organizations focus on addressing structural inequalities regarding gender and sexuality from an intersectional approach. Instead of waiting for school bullying to "get better" or seeing gay marriage as a solution to the ills of homophobia, they recognize that oppressions are linked and that fighting one necessarily means challenging others. As such, I would suggest that specific anti-bullying interventions are short-sighted and that programs, organizations, and curricula that focus on emotional literacy, social injustice, and inequality offer more effective ways of addressing social change than programs focusing on specific prevention measures.

When we call aggressive interactions between young people, in this case boys, bullying and ignore the messages about inequality (e.g., gender inequality, embedded serious and joking relationships), we risk divorcing what they are doing from larger issues of inequality and sexualized power. Doing so discursively contains this sort of behavior within the domain of youth, framing it as something in which adults play no role. It allows adults to project blame on kids for being mean to one another, rather than acknowledging that their behavior reflects society-wide problems of inequality and prejudice.[79] It allows adults to tell them "it gets better," as if the adult world is rife with equality and kindness. It allows the rest of society to evade blame for perpetuating the structural and cultural inequalities that these kids are playing out interactionally.

Notes

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12. Pascoe, *Dude, You're a Fag*.
13. Dan Olweus, *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1993).
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15. For an example of the varied legal definitions, please see the state-by-state analysis of anti-bullying statutes, V. Stuart-Cassel, A. Bell, and J. F. Springer, "Analysis of State Bullying Laws and Policies," U.S. Department of Education, (2011), http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/bullying/state-bullying-laws/state-bulling-laws.pdf.
16. Jeanne M. Hilton, Linda Anngela-Cole, and Juri Wakita, "A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Factors Associated with School Bullying in Japan and the United States," *Family Journal* 18 (2010): 413–22; Levy et al., *Bullying in a Networked Area.*
17. Levy et al., *Bullying in a Networked Area;* Alice E. Marwick and Danah Boyd, "The Drama! Teen Conflict, Gossip, and Bullying in Networked Publics" (Paper presented at A Decade in Internet Time: Symposium on the Dynamics of the Internet and Society, 2012); referring to particular interactions as "drama" rather than bullying, for instance.
18. Lee A. Beaty and Erick B. Alexeyev, "The Problem of School Bullies: What the Research Tells Us," *Adolescence* 43 (Spring 2008): 1–11.
19. Finkelhor et al., "Let's Prevent Peer Victimization," 2.
20. Levy et al., *Bullying in a Networked Area*.

21. Finkelhor et al., "Let's Prevent Peer Victimization"; Levy et al., *Bullying in a Networked Area;* Beaty and Alexeyev, "The Problem of School Bullies."
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29. Ibid.
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37. Vaillancourt et al., "Bullying is Power."
38. Frisen et al., "Adolescents' Perception of Bullying."
39. Ibid.; Melissa Fleschler Peskin, Susan R. Tortolero, and Christine M. Markham, "Bullying and Victimization among Black and Hispanic Adolescents," *Adolescence* 41 (Fall 2006): 467–84; Seals and Young, "Bullying and Victimization."
40. Qing Li, "Cyberbullying in Schools: A Research of Gender Differences," *School Psychology International* 27 (2006): 157–70.
41. Frisen et al., "Adolescents' Perception of Bullying"; Levy et al., *Bullying in a Networked Area;* Seals and Young, "Bullying and Victimization"; Özgür Erdur-Baker, "Cyberbullying and its Correlation to Traditional Bullying, Gender and Frequent and Risky Usage of Internet-Mediated Communication Tools," *New Media & Society* 12 (2010): 109 –25.
42. Peskin et al., "Bullying and Victimization among Black and Hispanic Adolescents."
43. See, for instance, Gail S. Rys and George G. Bear, "Relational Aggression and Peer Relations: Gender and Developmental Issues," *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly (1982–)* 43 (January 1997): 87–106.
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45. Michael Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity," in *The Masculinities Reader,* ed. Stephen Whitehead and Frank Barrett (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2001), 266–87; Gregory Lehne, "Homophobia among Men: Supporting and Defining the Male Role," in *Men's Lives,* ed. Michael Kimmel and Michael Messner (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998), 237–49; Mary Jane Kehily and Anoop Nayak, "'Lads and Laughter': Humour and the Production of Heterosexual Masculinities," *Gender and Education* 9 (1997): 69–87; Pascoe, *Dude, You're a Fag;* Douglas Schrock and Michael Schwalbe, "Men, Masculinity, and Manhood Acts," *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009): 277–95; George W. Smith, "The Ideology of 'Fag': The School Experience of Gay Students," *Sociological Quarterly* 39(1998): 309–35.
46. Pascoe, "Multiple Masculinities? Teenage Boys Talk about Jocks and Gender," *American Behavioral Scientist* 46 (2003): 1423–38.
47. Ken Corbett, "Faggot = Loser," *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 2 (2001): 3–28; Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia."
48. Or are identified by others.
49. Pascoe, "Multiple Masculinities."
50. That said, there are scholars who argue that because boys use these terms jokingly they are divorced from their original meaning and as such are not homophobic (for example, see Mark McCormack, *The Declining Significance of Homophobia: How Teenage Boys are Redefining Masculinity and Heterosexuality* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2012]).
51. Presumably a heterosexual activity.

52. Olweus, *Bullying at School*.
53. Though many of these instances would fail Olweus's test as they were perpetrated by different students.
54. Or they wish to render the other person unmanly.
55. Kehily and Nayak, "Lads and Luaghter"; Peter Lyman, "The Fraternal Bond as a Joking Relationship: A Case Study of the Role of Sexist Jokes in Male Group Bonding," in *Men's Lives,* 4th ed., ed. Michael Kimmel and Michael Messner (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998), 171–93.
56. Tristan S. Bridges, "Men Just Weren't Made to Do This: Performances of Drag at 'Walk a Mile in Her Shoes' Marches," *Gender and Society* 24 (February 2010): 5–30.
57. Michael Billing, *Laughter and Ridicule: Toward a Social Critique of Humor* (London: Sage Fine and de Soucey, 2005); Bridges, "Men Just Weren't Made to Do This."
58. In this instance, adulthood!
59. Pascoe, *Dude, You're a Fag*.
60. Tuija Huuki, Sari Manninen, and Vappu Sunnari, "Humour as a Resource and Strategy for Boys to Gain Status in the Field of Informal School," *Gender & Education* 22 (2010): 369.
61. Kevin Dolack, "Principles Punishes High School Boys with Public Hand Holding," *ABCnews,* November 30, 20i2, http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2012/11/principal-punishes-high-school-boys-with-public-hand-holding/.
62. "'High Jack This Fags': Where Gay Men and Lesbians Fit Into the New World Disorder," *Democracynow,* 93:28, October 30, 2001, http://www.democracynow.org/2001/10/30/high_jack_this_fags_where_gay.
63. Not to mention sexism.
64. Or in addition to.
65. Finkelhor, H. Turner, and S. Hamby, "Questions and Answers about the National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence," *Juvenile Justice Bulletin* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 20ii): i–4.
66. Karl Bryant and Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, "Introduction to Retheorizing Homophobias," *Sexualities* 11 (2008): 387–96; Gregory M. Herek, "'Beyond Homophobia': Thinking about Sexual Prejudice and Stigma in the Twenty-First Century," *Sexuality Research and Social Policy* 1 (2004): 6–24; Kenneth Plummer, *The Making of the Modern Homosexual* (London: Hutchinson, 1981).
67. To say nothing of the lack of federal protection; please see "Transgender Issues: A Fact Sheet" (http://www.transgenderlaw.org/resources/transfactsheet.pdf) for more information.
68. See for instance the campaign discourses in the Kerry versus Bush presidential campaign; A. C. Fahey, "French and Feminine: Hegemonic Masculinity and the Emasculation of John Kerry in the 2004 Presidential Race," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24 (2007): 132–50.
69. William Corsaro, *The Sociology of Childhood* (London: Pine Forge Press, 1997).
70. Often used to describe young people's behavior and not adult behavior.
71. See Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, Hatchet Book Group, 2009) for more on this discussion.
72. Of often equal status.
73. Finkelhor et al., "Lets Prevent Peer Victimization."

74. Finkelhor et al., "Questions and Answers."
75. Nan Stein, "Bullying as sexual harassment," in *The Jossey-Bass Reader on Gender in Education,* ed. Susan M. Bailey (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 409 –28.
76. Elizabeth Meyer, *Gender, Bullying, and Harassment: Strategies to End Sexism and Homophobia in Schools* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2009).
77. Hoover and G. Olson, "Sticks and Stones May Break Their Bones: Teasing as Bullying," *Reclaiming Children and Youth: Journal of Strength-Based Interventions* 9 (2000): 87–91.
78. This would conflict with some researchers who argue that the term itself is important as studies using it results in fewer "false positives" of reports of bullying; Michele L. Ybarra, Danah Boyd, Josephine Korchmaros, and Jay Oppenheim, "Defining and Measuring Cyberbullying within the Larger Context of Bullying Victimization," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 51 (2012): 53–58.
79. And reinforces.

the same problems, but we did observe that some attended a meeting of the school club for high-achieving black students.

6. According to students' reports, blacks at Dalton High School were noticeably less well off than whites.
7. Another white informant at Dalton High School indicated that because she was "smart" her friends thought "I think I'm better than them." She did not refer to status group distinctions, however, nor did the white informant at Avery High School who described an almost identical situation.
8. Socioeconomic data by race for the schools were not available, but our interviews with black students at Clearview High School showed less perception of class differences between blacks and whites than found at Dalton High School (where we interviewed far fewer black students). Intraracially, however, the interviews showed more animosity among white students at Clearview tied to a greater perception of class differences among that group.
9. We found evidence of a burden of acting white in another study we conducted involving 65 high-achieving black students at 19 high schools. However, it was not widespread, and the school context mattered. For example, preliminary analyses identified about ten cases in which students reported encountering racialized oppositionality. All were cases of students attending racially mixed schools, and almost all the students were isolated from other blacks in advanced classes. Few of these students were in schools in which an oppositional culture was embedded, however.
10. The accusation of acting as if you are "better than" others usually is linked to charges of acting white as well. Among blacks, class-based condemnations may also include the label "bourgie."
11. Our data suggest that school locale (e.g., urban, rural) also may be significant, but it is not clear how or why. Moreover, other research (including our own and that of Mickelson and Velasco [2006]) shows that a burden of acting white exists for black students in urban schools. It seems likely that certain combinations of school factors can create a "perfect storm" effect, producing a burden of acting white for some students.

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