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**HATE AT SCHOOL:  
ASSESSING THE ROLE OF BIAS MOTIVATION  
IN ADOLESCENT PEER VICTIMIZATION**

A Dissertation in  
Criminology

By

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## ABSTRACT

Prejudicial aggression contains a social significance that is unparalleled by non-prejudicial aggression. Accordingly, peer victimization motivated by bias against a target's characteristics may be unique from nonbiased victimization in both etiology and impacts. As hate-motivated, intergroup conflict has given rise to some of history's worst atrocities – such as genocide and lynching– it is important to intervene when the prejudice is still forming: during childhood and adolescence. Discriminatory victimization among youth can be better prevented if it is viewed as a distinct behavior with unique risk factors. However, scholarship has been slow to develop this area of research, and most existing studies on biased victimization among adolescents have not drawn from work on hate crime or general criminological theory. This dissertation highlights the ways in which biased victimization differs from nonbiased victimization, arguing that greater research and policy attention to prejudicial aggression is needed.

To demonstrate the distinct harms stemming from bias, Study 1 analyzed two nationally representative datasets (i.e., The National Crime Victimization Survey's School Crime Supplement and the Health Behavior among School-aged Children Survey) containing information about adolescent peer victimization at school and assessed the impacts of experiencing biased versus nonbiased (and no) victimization. In both datasets, students who experienced biased victimization at school experience worse outcomes than students who have not experienced biased victimization at school, even in analyses that employed a matching strategy to account for observed differences between students who experienced biased victimization and those who did not. Study 2 extended prior research by assessing the extent to which hate speech victimization co-occurs with nonbiased victimization at school. The goal of

this analysis was to assess whether experiencing hate speech at school is typically an isolated experience or a component of a broader pattern of poly-victimization. I also examined whether different types and combinations of victimization influenced odds of: 1) fear of victimization at school; and 2) avoiding places at school due to concern about victimization. Results indicated that hate speech is often experienced alongside bullying, and that impacts are greatest for poly-victimization regardless of whether hate speech is involved.

Study 3 assessed the risk factors for biased victimization and biased perpetration relative to nonbiased victimization and perpetration. Broadly, my goal was to determine whether there are risk factors uniquely associated with biased victimization and biased perpetration, respectively, grounding my expectations in explanations of hate crime as well as general criminological theories. I also determined whether there was an overlap between victimization and perpetration of biased bullying, following prior research on the victim-offender overlap and victim-bullies. Findings indicated that there was a substantial overlap between biased victimization and biased perpetration, and that certain personal characteristics were uniquely associated with biased victimization (being female, under/overweight, not born in the U.S., family financial difficulties) and biased perpetration (being male, Black or Hispanic), mostly in accordance with hate crime theories. Although risky lifestyles were common among youth who had perpetrated biased bullying, these factors did not distinguish biased perpetrators from nonbiased perpetrators. Carrying a weapon stood out as the sole risky lifestyle variable associated with biased (vs nonbiased) bullying perpetration.

On the whole, the analyses from these studies revealed that biased and nonbiased incidents cluster within students, that a non-trivial number of victims of biased bullying are also perpetrators of biased bullying, and that experiencing discrimination as a component of school

bullying victimization is associated with increased risk of negative impacts for students. The findings are generally in line with existing explanations for biased aggression – such as thrill seeking and cultural explanations – though greater attention to the victim-perpetrator overlap, gender, and potential status goals of biased bullies is warranted. These results have important implications for advancing scholarly understanding of early manifestations of prejudicial attacks and spotlight one avenue by which educational institutions may serve to perpetuate and magnify existing social inequalities.

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## Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

### **Dissertation Contributions**

Violence and aggression motivated by bias, hate, or prejudice can inflict serious harm on society and on individuals (e.g., Iganski, 2001). For individuals, prejudicial victimization causes psychological distress and physical harm (Vedeler, Olsen & Eriksen, 2019; Gelber & McNamara, 2016) and is an affront to the dignity of its victims (Delgado, 1993). For society, hate crime exacerbates inter-group conflicts, incites societal divisions, and tarnishes norms of multiculturalism (Martin, 1993; Perry, 2015). In short, victimizing others because of their identity causes distinct harm.

For the most part, research on bias-motivated victimization has examined samples of adults, even though adolescents report perpetrating and being victimized by prejudiced violence at higher rates than adults (Godinet & Stotzer, 2017). Adolescence is an important time for forming social, emotional, and cultural competencies, the development of which may be damaged by experiences by discrimination (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2007; Hammack, 2003). Moreover, few studies have focused specifically on bias-motivated victimization perpetrated by peers at school. Since children spend a substantial amount of time at school (i.e., 6.5 hours per day on average for 180 days per year; NCES 2008), it is crucial that research examine negative experiences that occur at school. Furthermore, as numerous child-serving professionals work in schools, there are clear prevention and intervention implications from research that examines school-based incidents.

This omission in scholarly literature assumes even greater importance considered alongside the backdrop of soaring rates of mental health disorders among young people born in the mid 1990s and early 2000s (Gunnell, Kidger & Elvidge, 2018; McMillan, Land & Leslie,



2017; U.S. Surgeon General, 2021). As traumatizing experiences can lead to impulsiveness, aggression, and delinquency through mental health disorders and disrupted personality development (Perez et al., 2018; Ford et al., 2012), understanding and preventing incidents of discriminatory peer victimization may have downstream impacts on crime and juvenile justice involvement. These downstream effects may also extend to educational outcomes, given that many of these incidents occur at school and can interfere with educational success.

This dissertation advances the literature on school-based, bias-motivated victimization by using two nationally representative datasets, one of which contains several years of recent data, to examine bias-motivated bullying and victimization among youth at school. Specifically, I use the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) School Crime Supplement (SCS) and the Health Behavior in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey to examine the prevalence, impacts, and risk factors of bias-motivated (i.e., biased) school victimization and bullying perpetration at school. These data are well suited to produce generalizable findings that extend beyond one geographic area at one point in time, as the NCVS data are nationally representative and span twenty years (1999-2019). Use of two datasets allows me to overcome the weaknesses of each dataset and provides a more holistic understanding of this phenomenon that would be possible with any one dataset.

Study 1 establishes that experiencing biased victimization is more impactful for students than experiencing nonbiased victimization across a range of outcomes. Part A of Study 1 analyses a sample of victims from the NCVS SCS 2017 and 2019 and assesses whether biased victimization is associated with perceived negative impacts on victims' physical health, self-esteem, social relationships, and schoolwork more strongly than nonbiased victimization. I then examine whether the odds of experiencing each of the perceived impacts increases as the number

of bias types targeted by the victimization increases. Prior studies of biased victimization have generally focused on only one bias, most commonly race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religion. However, some victims experience attacks related to more than one of their identities. Notably, a few studies have begun to investigate the prevalence and impacts of multiply biased attacks (Mulvey et al., 2018; Mitchell et al., 2020). Since these studies suggest that multiply biased attacks are relatively common, more research is needed.

In Part B of Study 1, I determine whether biased victimization is associated with greater unwellness than nonbiased victimization (and no victimization) in the HBSC data. Specifically, I compare wellbeing in the past week for victims of biased bullying in the past couple of months, victims of nonbiased bullying in the past couple of months, and nonvictims, using Coarsened Exact Matching (CEM) to compare youth who are similar on potentially confounding variables. As youth who are likely to be victimized by biased bullying may differ from youth who are not likely to be victimized by biased bullying in ways that could influence wellbeing, research comparing wellbeing across types of victims should account for these potentially confounding influences. Thus, Part B of Study 1 builds on Part A of Study 1 and extends prior research by improving the internal validity of estimates through matching techniques.

Study 2 addresses the co-occurrence of biased incidents – in this case, hate speech – with nonbiased bullying and crime at school.<sup>1</sup> Most existing work on bias-motivated victimization of adolescents does not examine whether nonbiased victimization co-occurs with biased incidents to jointly influence youths' well-being. One type of nonbiased victimization that has been nearly unexamined is the influence of criminal victimization, probably because criminal victimization is experienced relatively rarely in comparison to other negative experiences that occur at school.

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<sup>1</sup> Hate speech victimization is the focus of this chapter because the NCVS does not measure bias-motivated *bullying* victimization prior to 2015.

Yet experiencing criminal victimization at school – especially in tandem with bias-motivated aggression— does occur and is likely extremely distressing for young victims. Study 2 uses the NCVS SCS 2005-2019 data to examine the prevalence as well as impacts (on fear and avoidance) of hate speech for youth who both have and have not also experienced criminal and bullying victimization. The large sample size obtained through concatenation of the NCVS data increases confidence in the results, as the number of youths who have been criminally victimized is large enough to obtain reliable estimates.

Study 3 assesses the extent to which criminological concepts - including the victim-offender overlap as well as theoretically relevant risky lifestyle variables – are useful for understanding discriminatory incidents. I examine the overlap and risk factors of biased bullying victimization and perpetration using the HBSC data. In Part A of Study 3, I determine whether there is an overlap between biased victimization and perpetration. Only a few prior studies have examined this possibility, even though multiple theoretical perspectives – including social learning theory (Sutherland, 1947) – suggest it is likely, and evidence of a biased bullying victim-perpetrator overlap finding speaks to the etiology of the behavior. This study also determines whether variables that are typically emphasized in current victimization theory (e.g., risky lifestyle predictors) apply to biased victimization as well. Given that biased victimization targets individuals for their social characteristics, it may be that these theories are less important for explaining biased versus nonbiased victimization.

Finally, Part B of Study 3 examines the risk factors for biased bullying perpetration, shifting focus away from the perpetration-victimization overlap. As for victimization, it is likely that factors related to the perpetration of biased victimization differ from those for the perpetration of nonbiased victimization. As the perpetration of bias-motivated offending among

youth is understudied (Stotzer, 2015), an examination of the factors associated with the perpetration of bias-motivated victimization by youth is warranted. This gap is especially important because strategies undertaken by schools to reduce prejudicial aggression and bullying rely on understanding the reasons for perpetration. This study draws from theoretical work on the causes of biased offending (e.g., the typology of hate crime offending, strain theory, structured action theory) to deduce hypotheses regarding which factors should be especially relevant for the perpetration of bias-motivated (versus nonbiased) victimization.

This research builds on my prior work with these data (Kurpiel et al., 2022), which found that racial/ethnic differences in fear of attack or harm at school are influenced by factors beyond criminal victimization risk – especially exposure to crime and violence (e.g., gangs at school) and noncriminal harms (e.g., hate speech). Hate speech was particularly important for explaining Black youths’ fear in comparison to White and Hispanic youths’ fear. The current study extends this finding by more closely examining youth’s experiences with hate speech and biased victimization school. See Table 1-1 for a summary of the data sources analyzed in each chapter of this dissertation, as well as notes on sample restrictions in each case.

Table 1-1: Summary of data sources analyzed in this dissertation

	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Analytic Sample</b>
Study 1: Impacts of biased and nonbiased victimization			
Part A	NCVS SCS	2017, 2019	Bullied youth, <i>N</i> = 2, 241
Part B	HBSC	2009/2010	<i>N</i> = 11, 335
Study 2: Co-occurrence between hate speech and nonbiased victimization			
	NCVS SCS	2005-2019 (every other year)	<i>N</i> = 38, 644
Study 3: Biased and nonbiased victimization and perpetration: overlap and risk factors			
Part A	HBSC	2009/2010	Excludes grades 5 and 6; <i>N</i> = 8,739
Part B	HBSC	2009/2010	Excludes grades 5 and 6; <i>N</i> = 8,739

*Notes:* NCVS SCS= National Crime Victimization Survey, School Crime Supplement.  
HBSC = Health Behavior in School-aged Children (U.S. version).

### **Defining Bias-Motivated Victimization**

Bias-motivated victimization occurs when the perpetrator of violence, harassment, bullying, derogatory speech, or crime chooses a victim based on their actual or perceived social characteristics. This choice typically reflects the perpetrator’s belief in negative stereotypes about the victim’s social group (Craig, 2002). Due to the adverse effects of prejudice, victims of bias-motivated victimization may experience greater harms than other types of victims (Iganski 2001). The harms of bias-motivated victimization can also extend to members of the victims’ social group who were not directly victimized but who are affected by knowledge of the discriminatory intent (Perry & Alvi 2012; Noelle 2002).

Violent acts committed against people because of their group identification were not legally recognized as a unique form of violence until the early 1990s (APA, 2004). Increasing awareness of the harms of bias-motivated crime has generated an expansion in the number of hate crime laws over the past half century (Gerstenfeld, 2017). In the United States, hate crime laws are statutory enhancements that increase criminal justice sanctions when there is evidence of bias-motivation. While hate crime laws have gained support in recent decades, there remains

disagreement about which social characteristics should be included under such laws. That is, although most supporters agree that aggression based on dislike of people from a particular race/ethnicity constitutes prejudice, for example, there is less consensus about whether targeting a victim based on other statuses, such as homelessness, qualifies as bias-motivation.

Most school-based bullying and violence prevention programming focuses on general bullying without a component addressing discriminatory victimization, (see Earnshaw et al. 2018 for review). Mirroring the debate in legal spaces, there is also not a consensus among school personnel regarding which bullying behaviors are prejudicial, and which biases should be considered biased victimization. For example, weight- and appearance- based bullying is contested as a form of discrimination, and biases such as that related to gender are not universally agreed upon as discriminatory.

Furthermore, crime and aggression are usually committed for multiple reasons, and it is not always clear whether prejudice was a driving factor. For instance, if a woman is robbed because she is wearing clothing suggesting she is wealthy, is this crime motivated by bias? In the United States it would generally not be, because economic class is not a social characteristic included under most hate crime laws. Moreover, if the choice of victim was determined solely by the estimated likelihood of economic gain and not out of animosity towards wealthy people, the offender is not acting out of prejudice. It can be difficult to discern in the school context why students chose their victims, and if social group is a relevant factor.

In the U.S., all state hate crime laws include bias against race, ethnicity and/or national origin, and religion. Currently, sexual orientation, gender, and disability are included in most states' laws (i.e., about 30). Gender identity and/or transgender identity and age are included in 15 states' laws, and political affiliation is included in 6 states (Gerstenfeld, 2017: 28). Some

states have also added homelessness (3 states) and public safety personnel (1 state). Regardless of legislation, however, the issue of determining which characteristics *should* be included in hate crime laws, and in the definition of bias-motivation for research, is an open question.

Most scholars take one of two approaches. The first approach is most strongly advocated by Canadian scholar Barbara Perry, who contends that the social, historical, and political context of a society's power relations is integral to understanding hate crime (Perry, 2001). Perry (2001) suggests that hate crime laws should protect groups that have historically been discriminated against. Her reasoning follows the logic of the Supreme Court in *U.S. vs Carolene Products* (1938), which decided how to assess whether the government has denied citizens their right to equal protection of the law under the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment. According to the Court, the standard to assess whether this protection has been denied is determined by whether the individual is a member of group categorized as a "suspect class" (*U.S. vs Carolene Products*, 1938). Government actions that adversely affect members of a suspect class, also referred to as a "discrete and insular minority," are scrutinized more closely than actions that adversely affect groups who are not a suspect class. These actions must also be justified by a "compelling state interest," a standard that is never met (Bagshaw, 2013). Suspect classification is determined by factors such as a history of discrimination, immutable or highly visible traits, and powerlessness in the political process.

Just as the Court ruled that certain social groups should be given special protections by the law, Perry (2001) suggests that hate crime law should also focus on historically marginalized groups because bias-motivated crime allows members of powerful social groups to affirm their superiority over marginalized groups. In her words, hate crime:

"...involves acts of violence and intimidation, usually directed toward already stigmatized and marginalized groups. As such, it is a mechanism of power, intended to reaffirm the precarious hierarchies that characterize a given social

order. It attempts to recreate simultaneously the threatened (real or imagined) hegemony of the perpetrator's group and the 'appropriate' subordinate identity of the victim's group (Perry, 2001:10).

This definition implies that bias-motivated crime is most often inflicted upon, and most harmful to, victims of historically marginalized groups. Perry's perspective is shared by several hate crime scholars, who also suggest that hate crime causes exceptional harm because of the stigma associated with the targeted social identity (Craig- Henderson & Sloan, 2003; Walters et al., 2011; Lawrence 2009).

The second approach is most strongly articulated by Chakraborti and Garland (2012), whose disagreement with Perry's definition is that not all bias-motivated crime is committed to subordinate a marginalized group. Instead, they suggest that perceived vulnerability and difference should be central to the definition of hate crime, regardless of historical marginalization. Following intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1990), they claim that victims of hate crime are not chosen because of their 'main' identity, but because multiple social characteristics intersect to create a perception of vulnerability. Vulnerability, in their view, is defined as an inadequate capacity to resist victimization and its consequences.

Chakraborti and Garland (2012)'s definition also suggests that groups not typically included in hate crime laws should be treated as hate crime victims when they are attacked due to their vulnerability stemming from difference (e.g., members of a subculture such as goths; the elderly, homeless people). Their argument is to:

"...move beyond the conventionally hierarchical identity-based approach that stringently, and singularly, associates hate crime with particular strands of victims and particular sets of motivations, and instead to focus on factors that unite victims of hate crime, which in essence is their perceived vulnerability and 'difference.' It is not someone's identity per se that makes them a vulnerable target in the eyes of the perpetrator, but rather the way in which that identity intersects with other aspects of their self and with other situational factors and context" (Chakraborti & Garland, 2012).

A second problem Chakraborti and Garland (2012) have with Perry's definition of hate crime is the idea that hate-motivated violence is used as a means of group subordination. They argue that



hate crime is often motivated for more “ordinary” reasons, such as convenience or thrill. Thus, characterizing hate crime as group subordination would be an oversimplification. They call for scholars to take a broader approach to understanding and defining hate crime.

Chakraborti and Garland (2012)’s criticism is generally acknowledged in the literature as an important reflection on the boundaries of hate policy. However, reconceptualizing hate crime law to fit this definition is unlikely for two reasons. First, Chakraborti & Garland (2012)’s approach of focusing on multiple intersecting identities makes it difficult to argue that hate crimes affect indirect victims, as there are fewer people who share the victims’ precise constellation of characteristics than who share the main identity targeted by the offense. Second, the argument that hate crime could incite retaliation among group members and cause community unrest is also weakened if hate victims are not defined based on the main identity targeted by the crime. As impacts on indirect victims and incitement of community violence are two key arguments for why hate crimes deserve additional penalty (Iganski 2001; Wisconsin v. Mitchell 1993), Perry (2001)’s definition is preferable from a policy perspective.

On the other hand, studies of peer victimization motivated by bias among youth generally take a broader approach to defining bias-motivation than hate crime law. Although many surveys define bias as prejudice related to race, ethnicity/national origin, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and disability, others also ask about incidents prompted by weight- and appearance- based stigma as well (e.g., Bucchianeri et al., 2014; Eisenberg et al., 2015; Jones et al. 2018). Studies focused specifically on hate *speech* sometimes take an even broader approach. For example, one study defined hate speech as a: “communicative form of expression that deliberately promotes, justifies, or disseminates exclusion, contempt, and devaluation of particular social group” (Wachs et al., 2021). In this dissertation, biased incidents are defined as

bullying that the victim or perpetrator perceived to be related to particular characteristics, though the exact characteristics and wording of indicators varies across data sources. See Figures 1-1 and 1-2 for the measurement of biased victimization in the current study. In addition, the terms “victimization” and “bullying” are used interchangeably. Although “bullying” in scholarly literature refers to the subset of school victimization wherein there is a power imbalance and experiences are repeated over time, in practice, students probably do not read the definition of bullying, even when provided with one. Furthermore, the measures used in the current study each contain several indicators specifying the type of behavior involved in the bullying/victimization, so the use of the term bullying itself should not be hugely impactful for students’ responses.

Figure 1-1. Measurement of Biased Victimization for Study 1, NCVS SCS 2017-2019

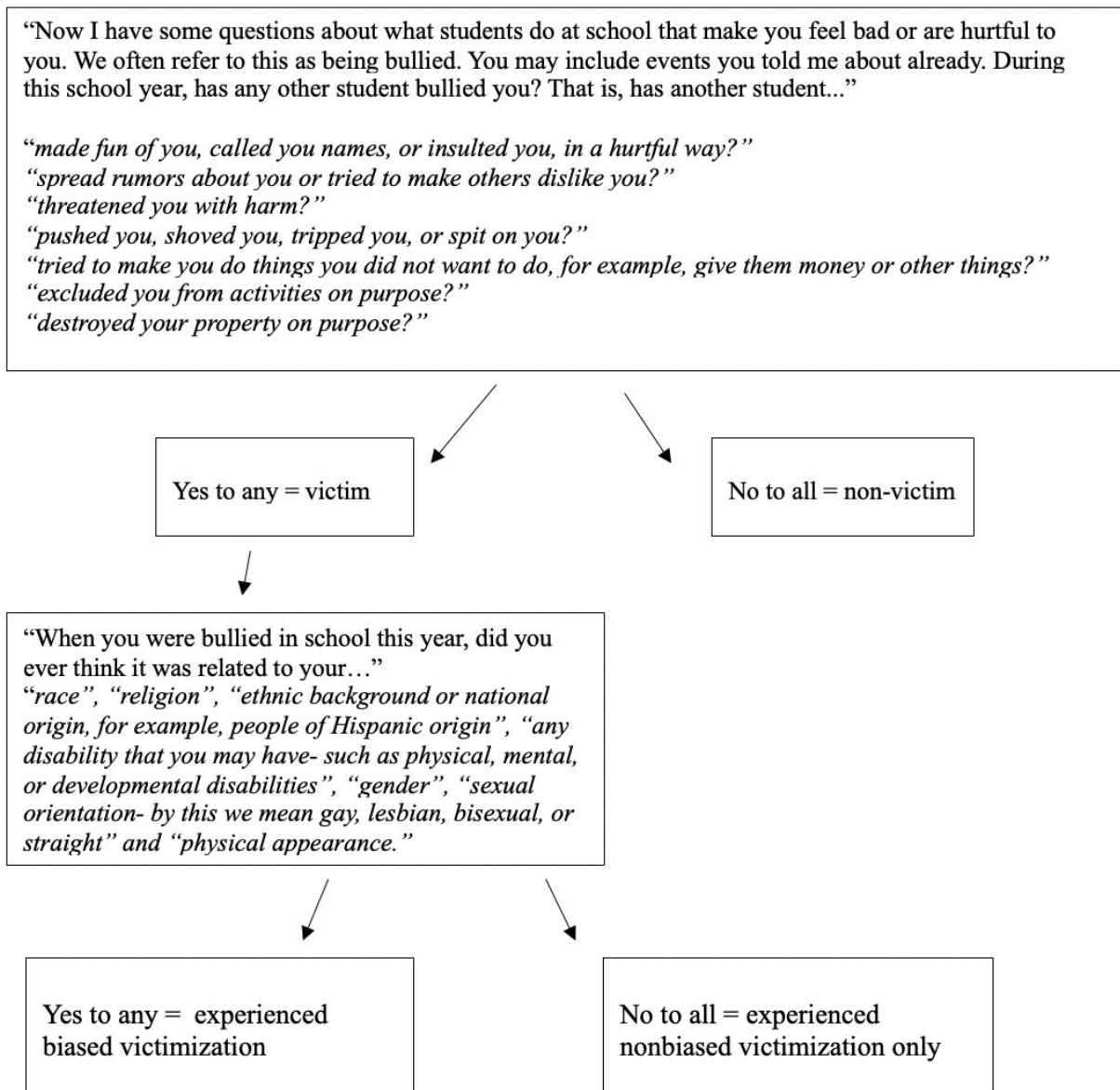


Figure 1-2. Measurement of Biased Bullying Perpetration for Study 3, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade-and Up, HBSC 2009-2010 |

“Here are some questions about bullying. We say a student is BEING BULLIED when another student, or a group of students, say or do nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a student is teased repeatedly in a way he or she does not like or when he or she is deliberately left out of things. But it is NOT BULLYING when two students of about the same strength or power argue or fight. It is also not bullying when a student is teased in a friendly and playful way.

**How often have you bullied another student(s) at school in the past couple of months in the ways listed below?**

*Several times a week*      *only once or twice*

*“I have not bullied another student in this way in the past couple of months”*

*About once a week*

*2 or 3 times a month*

Any affirmative response to any of the following = **biased perpetration**

*e. I bullied another student(s) with mean names and comments about his or her race or color*

*f. I bullied another student(s) with mean names and comments about his or her religion*

*g. I made sexual jokes, comments, or gestures to another student(s)*

No affirmative response = **no perpetration**

Only an affirmative response to any of the following = **nonbiased perpetration**

*a. I called another student(s) mean names, and made fun of, or teased him or her in a hurtful way*

*b. I kept another student(s) out of things on purpose, excluded him or her from my group of friends, or completely ignored him or her*

*c. I hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked another student(s) indoors*

*d. I spread false rumors about another student(s) and tried to make others dislike him or her*

*h. I bullied another student(s) using a computer or e-mail messages or pictures*

*i. I bullied another student(s) using a cell phone*

*j. I bullied others outside of school using a computer or e-mail messages or pictures*

*k. I bullied others outside of school using a cell phone*

## **Bias Types: Overview of Prevalence and Impacts**

According to both victim self-report surveys and official crime data, race/ethnicity is the most common characteristic targeted by bias-motivated victimization in the United States. The U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation (2020) reported that 62% of all single-type bias incidents reported to the police in 2020 were motivated by racial or ethnic bias, followed by sexual orientation bias (20%) and bias related to religion (13%; see also Messner, McHugh, & Felson, 2004). Victim surveys of adults (Masucci & Langton, 2017) and youth (Utley et al., 2022; Russell et al., 2012; Bucchianeri et al., 2016; Mitchell et al., 2020) suggest similar prevalence patterns, although some studies find that sexual orientation bias is more common than racial/ethnic bias among incidents involving adolescents (e.g., Mendez et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2018). When appearance- and weight- based bias are included as bias types, they are also very common, especially among girls (e.g., Bucchianeri et al., 2014).

Research on victim impacts has generally focused on only one bias type, and much of this work examines victimization related to sexual orientation bias. Even though this research does not typically provide a comparison to other bias types, studies suggest that incidents motivated by sexual orientation bias cause great distress among young victims (Tucker et al., 2016) and relate to greater impacts than peer harassment not related to sexual orientation (Poteat et al., 2011). Furthermore, a study using the FBI's NIBRS (i.e., national incident-based reporting system) data found that crimes motivated by sexual orientation bias were more likely than crimes motivated by racial bias to occur at school (Stacey, 2011). Thus, sexual orientation bias may be especially important to examine in school-based research.

In addition, some research suggests that sexual minority youth are more likely than heterosexual youth to experience multiple types of bias-motivated victimization, including bias-

motivated victimization unrelated to sexual identity (Price-Feeney et al., 2018; Bucchianeri et al., 2016). Similarly, many disabled victims report experiencing bias incidents related to other social characteristics aside from disability (MacDonald et al., 2021; Mitchell et al., 2020; Bucchianeri et al., 2016). Studies of anti-disability-based victimization also suggest that perpetrators are often friends, family members, or other acquaintances who foster an exploitative “hate relationship” that is sustained over time (MacDonald, Donovan & Clayton, 2021).

Regarding bias related to religion, anti-Jewish crimes make up the majority of religion-based hate crimes in official data (around 85% pre 2001 and around 60% since 2001; Scheitle, & Hansmann, 2016), with much of the remainder being anti-Islamic. Some research suggests that Jewish victims are a “catchall” target for majority groups who feel threatened by minorities (Mills, 2020). Although research on youth has rarely focused solely on religion-based hate, studies that have included religious bias in their analyses find that bias-motivated victimization related to religion is associated with depressive symptomatology in adolescents (Price-Feeney, Jones, Ybarra & Mitchell, 2018).

Research that compares impacts across bias types finds that not all hate crime affects victims equally. For example, an analysis of hate crime among adults found that racial hate crime related to the greatest odds of experiencing physical reactions (e.g., anger), gender-based hate crime related to the highest odds of psychological reactions (e.g., depression), and bias crimes related to transgender identity and disability, respectively, were associated with the highest odds of experiencing *both* physical and psychological reactions (Williams & Tregidga, 2014). A study of university students in Sweden found that bias attacks targeting gender or sexual identity were the most likely to lead to worry about future victimization (Mellgren, Andersson, & Ivert, 2021; see also Mitchell et al., 2020).

## Chapter 2: EXPLANATIONS FOR BIASED OFFENDING & VICTIMIZATION

### **Biased Aggression: Individual Level**

#### *Hate Crime Offender Typology*

Using data on hate crimes committed in Boston from 1991 to 1992, McDevitt, Levin, and Bennet (2002) created a typology of hate crime offenders based on their reasons for offending. Reasons were identified through police, victim, and offender interviews and categorized into four types: thrill-seeking, defensive, mission, and retaliatory. Thrill-seeking crimes are the most common (66% of offenders in the Boston data) and are committed for excitement and pleasure. Thrill-seeking hate crimes are often committed in groups, and offenders usually leave their neighborhoods in search of victims who are considered easy targets because of their stigmatized social characteristics (McDevitt, Levin & Bennet, 2002).

The thrill obtained specifically through *hate* crime offending, as opposed to any (i.e., non-prejudiced) offending, comes from the display of power and normativity in front of peers that is characteristic of much hate crime offending (Levin & Reichelmann, 2015). More so than non-prejudiced offending, hate crime offending seeks to establish dominance and superiority over the victim. For example, anti-gay hate crime communicates the perpetrator's commitment to heteronormativity and distinguishes their own identity from homosexuality, a stigmatized "outsider" identity (Bufkin, 1999; Pascoe, 2005). The pleasure or thrill is derived from the social acceptance expected as a result. Based on this component of the typology, some researchers have suggested that a desire for social acceptance could explain why hate crime offending is high among juveniles, for whom peer approval is very important (Stotzer, 2015).

In addition to evidence from the Boston data, other studies also support the idea that thrill-seeking is a primary motivation for hate crime offending. Research on anti-Amish hate crime

(Byers & Crider, 2002) and anti-gay harassment among college students (Franklin, 2000), for example, finds that offenders often attribute their actions to boredom and the pursuit of excitement. Furthermore, Franklin (2000) identifies a desire to fit in with friends as a primary explanation for anti-gay attacks.

The second most common type of offender in McDevitt, Levin & Barnett's (2002) data is defensive crime (25% of offenders). These crimes occur when the offender perceives that their status or position is jeopardized by the victim's social group. Defensive offending is then committed to reinforce the existing social hierarchy of power or resources. This type of offending fits within the larger framework of group and power threat theories, which propose that acts of social control increase when a group perceives that their position in society has been altered by another social group (Blalock 1967; Blumer 1958; Tajfel 1982).

A substantial body of work supports the idea that reactions to threat undergird much of the violence and crime directed at social groups (King, Messner, & Baller, 2009; Grattet, 2009; Green, Strolovitch, & Wong, 1998). For instance, hate crime against immigrants can occur when the native White population believes that immigrants are competing with them for jobs (i.e., economic threat) or overpowering the existing culture (i.e., symbolic threat; Stacey, Carbone-López, & Rosenfeld, 2011). Similarly, hate crimes against minority racial/ethnic groups are prevalent in predominantly White neighborhoods where minority populations are large or increasing (Green, Strolovitch & Wong, 1998; Mills 2020), a phenomenon referred to as defended neighborhoods (Greene, Glaser, and Rich, 1998).

Although most studies of threat and offending focus on victims who are racial/ethnic minorities, threat can also lead to offending against other stigmatized social groups. For instance, Mills (2021) finds that anti-gay hate crime is more prominent in neighborhoods with large or



increasing gay visibility. In addition, events that cause a particular group to be perceived as threatening, such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks, can increase defensive hate crime offending against that group (Levin & Reichelmann, 2015). Thus, studies of the defensive hate crime must consider that the threat can extend to multiple domains (i.e., beyond racial and economic threat) and is influenced by social and political conditions and events.

The third type of offending is retaliatory crime (8% of offenders in the Boston data). Retaliatory crime is related to but distinct from defensive crime. Perpetrators of retaliatory crimes perceive that an aggressive action has been committed against their own social group first. In other words, in addition to a generalized threat from the victims' group, these offenders believe that the victims' group has provoked them by committing a crime themselves. McDevitt et al. (2002) suggest that retaliation is usually in response to a specific local event. Despite this distinction emphasized in the typology, most studies conceptualize retaliatory crimes under the conceptual umbrella of defensive hate crime (e.g., Bacon, May, & Charlesford, 2021).

The fourth type of offending is mission crime. Mission crimes occur when the perpetrator believes that the victims' social group is associated with an inferior or evil lifestyle. In these cases, the hate crime is committed to rid the world of an evil for the good of society. Mission crimes are usually committed by people who subscribe to a set of beliefs or ideology that is explicitly prejudiced or hateful. Although these types of hate crimes are rare (less than 1% of offenders in the Boston data), mission crimes are the most likely to be cases of extreme violence and destruction. Mission offenders are also more likely to act alone, be involved hate groups, and harbor strongly held convictions of antipathy towards their victims (McDevitt et al., 2002).

Recent studies of youth-perpetrated victimization motivated by bias have found motivations for offending that mirror the typology in McDevitt et al. (2002). For instance, Ballaschk, Wachs,

and Krause (2021) find that the pursuit of fun, ideological convictions, compensation for frustration and feelings of inferiority, and fear of diminishing status were all reasons for hate speech perpetration as reported by youthful offenders in Germany (as cited in Wachs et al., 2021). However, as there have not been any large-scale assessments of the entire typology, the evidence supporting the typology overall is weak (Gerstenfeld, 2017).

The McDevitt et al. (2002) typology is specific to biased offending. That is, it suggests that the causes of hate crime differ from non-hate (or non-biased) crime. However, many predictors of offending are the same for hate crime as for non-hate crime (e.g., age, gender, prior delinquency/offending; McNeely & Overstreet, 2018). Similarly, although some youth engage in only biased bullying, other youth engage in both biased and nonbiased bullying (Ozdemir, Giles & Ozdemir, 2020). Thus, although there likely are motivations for perpetrating biased victimization that do not apply to non-biased victimization, a comprehensive theory explaining biased offending should explain the commonalities across both biased and non-biased offending.

### ***Criminological Theories: Strain and Self-Control***

Some criminological theories developed to explain nonbiased crime may also apply to biased crime. Merton's strain theory (1938) is probably most frequently discussed in relation to hate crime. Merton's strain theory suggests that people who are unable to achieve culturally desired success goals (i.e., wealth) due to blocked access to legitimate means to achieve those goals (i.e., unequal access to resources) will sometimes adapt to their situation through what Merton calls "innovation." Innovation involves using illegitimate (criminal) means to achieve the success goals that are otherwise difficult to attain. Some strands of strain theory also emphasize that negative interpersonal relationships induce the use of maladaptive coping and crime in order to reduce frustration (Agnew, 1992).

Strain theory could apply to hate crime offending if strained individuals take out their frustration on groups who they believe are to blame for their difficulty in attaining cultural success goals, such as might be the case if the victims' group receives advantages or preferential government benefits. As cultural success goals are economic in nature in most of the U.S. and Europe (where most of the hate crime research has been conducted), strain theory is often used to explain prejudiced offending based on racial/ethnic bias or bias against immigrants (Gadd et al., 2005). Studies of race-based violence and discrimination during times of economic recessions support this application of strain theory (Bianchi, Hall, & Lee, 2018; Hepworth & West, 1988; Hovland & Sears, 1940), and research finding that many hate crime offenders are poor or working class is often cited as evidence of strain (Ezekiel, 1995).

However, Perry (2001) argues that strain theory as an explanation of hate crime is not empirically supported because much hate crime is committed by people who are economically advantaged. Instead, she suggests that hate crime is the result of perceived out-group members' threat to norms delineating which identities are at the top of the social hierarchy. She traces the origin of the social hierarchy to historically established systems of oppression, which is reinforced today through people, institutions, and the state (Perry, 2001).

Because social identities are hierarchically ordered, such that some are dominant or normative and others are marginalized, Perry (2001) suggests that people seek to reinforce the social order through subordinating minority group members. Thus, hate crime is a mechanism by which norms of heteronormativity are maintained, which allows people to position their own identity above others. She refers to discriminatory and biased acts, including hate crime, as "doing difference" because the goal of such acts is to establish a boundary between oneself and the marginalized identity (Perry, 2001).

Walters (2011) argues that explaining hate-crime offending requires synthesizing these two theories. He proposes that groups who threaten economic security *and* groups who threaten dominant cultural normativity are both frequent victims of hate crime. In other words, hate crime targets groups who are threatening economically, groups who are threatening to cultural normativity, and groups who are threatening *both* economically and to social norms. In addition, Walters (2011) claims there is a missing “micro” link in theorizing about hate crime offending, in that neither strain nor the “doing difference” theory explains why some people who experience each of these threats do not commit hate crime while other people do.

Walters (2011) suggests that the missing component of hate crime theorizing is Gottfredson and Hirschi’s (1990) theory of low self-control. Gottfredson & Hirschi (1990) propose that poor early-life socialization of children results in some people having lowered ability to foresee the consequences of their actions. This leads them to be more impulsive, risk-taking, and driven by physicality than better socialized children who have developed more self-control. People with low self-control are risk-takers in a variety of contexts, including their willingness to commit crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

Thus, although Walters (2011) agrees that hate crime offenders are affected by threat and social conditions (as hypothesized by the strain and doing difference theories), he proposes that most offenders will also have low self-control, which is a key factor driving them to commit the crime. He suggests that because people with low self-control have a low tolerance threshold for perceived threats (to economic security or to cultural normativity), they will commit hate crimes more frequently than people with more self-control even if the level of threat is similar. In support of the application of self-control theory to hate crime, some studies have found that

offender alcohol and drug use are associated with bias victimization more strongly than nonbiased victimization (Messner et al., 2004; Pezella & Fetzer, 2017).

Relatedly, scholars have considered how low self-control contributes to involvement in online hate (Bernatzky, Costello, & Hawdon 2021; Hawdon, Costello, Barrett-Fox, & Bernatzky, 2018). However, these studies have found only limited support for self-control theory. For example, in an examination of bullying incidents, Ozdemir, Giles and Ozdemir (2020) found that variables tapping into low self-control (e.g., impulsivity) predicted nonbiased but not biased bullying. However, another study by the same researchers found that self-control variables moderated the association between anti-immigrant sentiment and biased bullying, such that the biased bullying was more likely to occur when the youth who held anti-immigrant sentiments had low self-control (Baryam Ozdemir, Ozdemir & Stattin, 2016). Taken together, these studies suggest that low self-control may not directly affect hate crime offending but may make hate crime offending more likely when prejudice is already present.

Walters (2011) connects his synthesized explanation of hate crime offending to the McDevitt et al. (2002) typology. He suggests that low self-control is characteristic of the thrill-seeking hate crime offender and that strain theory explains some forms of defensive hate crime offending. Even so, Walters (2011) is careful to note that this synthesis does not provide an explanation for *all* hate offending, as mission hate crime does not fit into this framework.

### ***Psychological Explanations of Prejudice***

Psychological theories of the origins of prejudice are helpful for understanding harmful acts motivated by bias. One of the most widely researched explanations for prejudice is social categorization theory (Tajfel, 1982), which suggests that the categorization of oneself and others into in-groups (which one belongs to) and out-groups (which one does not belong to) is part of

the process of identity formation. Because it is most efficient for the human brain to develop shortcuts that help process the vast amount of information it is exposed to, these categorizations are the natural result of cognition (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019).

Critically, our categorizations align with the indicators of identity that are salient in society (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity) and are accompanied by assumptions about the characteristics of people in those social groups, which we refer to as stereotypes. Stereotypes are stronger for out-groups than in-groups because we tend to simplify information pertaining to out-groups. This leads to increased reliance on stereotypes for out-group homogeneity. On the other hand, for people in our in-groups, we are better able to identify individual differences (Hugenberg & Sacco, 2008). These stereotypes can lead to hostility towards some out-groups, which can result not only in prejudice but also in prejudice-based victimization (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000).

Fiske and colleagues (2006) suggest that social perceptions of outgroups reflect evolutionary pressures and along two primary dimensions: warmth and competence. Because it is critical for survival to determine whether others intend good will and whether they are able to carry out such intentions, people make determinations about these two dimensions (with warmth taking a primary role) and react to the other person accordingly. However, unlike individual perceptions, where warmth and competence correlate positively, the two dimensions are often negatively correlated for group perceptions. Thus, some groups in society are perceived as competent but not warm (rich people, Asian people) whereas others are perceived as warm but not competent (elderly, disabled).

These perceptions can lead to either passive or active harm against groups perceived as low on either dimension, although the warmth dimension is believed to promote a more active response due to its primacy. Groups that are perceived as low on both warmth and competence,

such as homeless people, would also elicit discriminatory tendencies and prejudices (see Figure 2-1). Furthermore, an intersectional approach would suggest that two traits can combine (i.e., elderly poor person) to create an especially negative perception. These two universal dimensions can be useful for understanding group-based aggressive acts, such as hate crime, because they may explain why some groups provoke especially strong reactions in offenders.

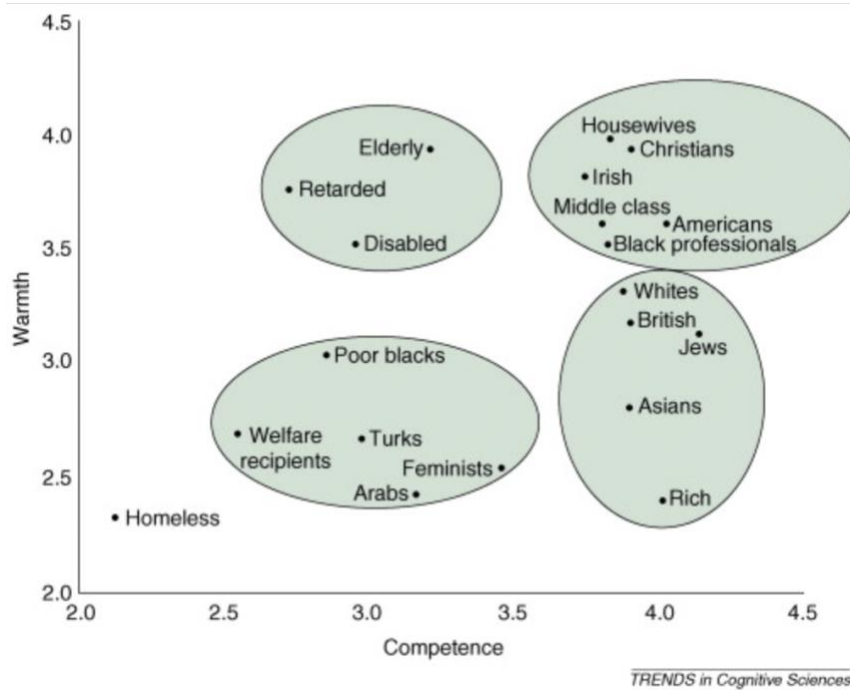


Figure 2-1: Perceptions of Outgroup' Warmth and Competence  
 Source: Fiske et al., (2007).

However, although social categorization theory posits that all people engage in this categorization and are aware of stereotypes, only some people develop prejudice based on those stereotypes. Even fewer people commit aggressive acts based on that prejudice. Thus, psychologists have sought explanations for why stereotyping leads to prejudice in some cases and not others, and, in turn, why this prejudice leads to hate crime in some cases. One such explanation is that people who commit hate crimes have an authoritarian personality.

A prejudiced or authoritarian personality is thought to develop from parenting styles that emphasize rigid beliefs, punitive discipline, and respect for authority. This parenting style teaches children that the world is hierarchically ordered, and that establishing authority through displays of power is important (Adorno, 1951). It is therefore expected that offenders who commit hate crimes to assert their dominance over marginalized groups will have a prejudiced or authoritarian personality. In support of this theory, much research has found that a prejudiced/authoritarian personality relates to general prejudice, although situational factors also play a role (see Hodson & Dhont, 2015 for review). Research specifically focused on offending related to sexual orientation bias has also been supportive of this theory, as offenders often have parents who subscribe to authoritarian values (Weinstein et al., 2012; Stones, 2006). However, the overall body of work examining prejudiced/authoritarian personality traits among perpetrators of bias-motivated crime and victimization is small.

Other work focuses on situational factors that influence aggressive behavior based on prejudice, such as the deindividuation that occurs in group settings (Aronson, 1999). Theories such as the aesthetic theory of vandalism (Allen & Greenberger, 1978) and the equity-control model (DeMore, Fisher & Baron 1988) suggest environmental factors that may influence a prejudiced person's tendency to express that prejudice through offending. Specifically, property that is easily damaged and provides pleasing feedback is more likely to be vandalized, and people who feel that their social environment is unequal may vandalize to gain control over their environment (Allen & Greenberger 1978; DeMore, Fisher & Baron, 1988).



### ***Gender and Masculinity Theories***

Males are more likely than females to participate in crime, delinquency, and most forms of bullying, aside from relational aggression (Campaniello & Gavrilova 2018; Mears, Ploeger, & Warr, 1998; Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010). This gender gap in offending is one of the most robust findings in criminology (Lauritsen, Heimer & Lynch, 2009). Studies of hate crime find that the gender gap in offending may be even larger than it is for nonbiased crime, and most theorizing about hate crime neglects female offending altogether (Lantz, 2022).

Although there are numerous explanations for the gender gap in non-prejudiced offending, structured action theory (Messerschmidt, 1997) is especially relevant to the gender gap in bias-motivated offending. Structured action theory suggests that crime is one of many ways in which people “accomplish” their identity. As crime and masculinity are both associated with dominance, men engage in crime to demonstrate their masculinity. Messerschmidt (1997) emphasizes that social structure limits the ways in which people can accomplish their identity, such that females are excluded from opportunities to demonstrate dominance. Because hate crimes are theorized as being committed to subordinate less powerful groups and establish dominance over others (Lantz, 2022; Perry 2001), it is logical to expect that males commit more hate crime than females. Some scholars have even suggested that “efforts to accomplish or ‘do’ hegemonic masculinity are at the heart of bias offending” (Burkin, 1999: 157).

Allison and Klein (2019) draw on both structured action theory (Messerschmidt, 1997) and Agnew’s general strain theory (1992) to explain hate crime offending. They suggest that hegemonic masculinity (the normative form of masculinity; Connell, 1987) is a cultural success goal that some men have blocked access to acquiring. Males who feel they are unable to demonstrate this form of masculinity face a host of negative consequences and feel strained as a

result. One way to alleviate the strain is to commit discriminatory violence to demonstrate their hegemonic masculinity (Allison & Klein, 2019).

Although males are more likely to commit *any* form of biased crime (i.e., regardless of bias type), the gender gap in offending is largest for crimes motivated by sexual orientation bias. For instance, a study using NIBRS data found that sexual orientation crimes were less likely than racial bias crimes to involve females as both victims and offenders (Stacey, 2011; see also Lantz 2022). That males are especially likely to commit hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation bias is probably because of the direct opposition between homosexuality and hegemonic masculinity. Anti-gay hate crimes, in other words, may be the most effective way to demonstrate hegemonic masculinity because they show disapproval of the form of sexual expression that is most threatening to it.

The gender gap in offending is mirrored in studies of youth as well. For instance, Ozdemir et al. (2016) find that boys are more likely than girls to engage in both bullying generally as well as to perpetrate bias-based victimization (see also Bayram Özdemir & Özdemir 2020). The authors of this study speculated that these gender effects might be explained by boys' less developed emotional and cognitive skills (for a meta-analysis, see Chaplin & Aldao 2013; Ozdemir, Giles & Ozdemir 2020; Bennett, Farrington, & Huesmann, 2005). Less developed emotional and cognitive skills could relate to hate crime when empathy and moral engagement remain lacking, as each of these skills relate to the perpetration of bias-based victimization (Wachs et al., 2022). Homophobic bullying perpetration is also more common among boys than it is among girls, which may be indicative of gender normative behavior being relatively more important for adolescent boys than girls (Poteat et al., 2012).

## ***Social Learning***

Social learning theories (Sutherland, 1947; Akers, 2015) suggest that deviant behavior is influenced by the social context because social interaction teaches people which behaviors are perceived as acceptable, and which are unacceptable, under various circumstances. Specifically, Akers (1992) proposed that the greater proportion of deviant peers (i.e., peers who conform to deviant norms), deviant definitions (i.e., attitudes favorable towards violation of norms/law), reinforcements for deviance (i.e., rewards promoting deviance), and imitation experiences (i.e., observing others' deviance) a person is exposed to, the greater the likelihood that they will engage in deviance themselves.

Following Sykes and Matza (1957), Akers (1992) acknowledged that these deviant definitions and attitudes did not necessarily have to be “pro-deviance” in the sense that deviance is seen as moral. Rather, the definitions are often neutralizations, which rationalize crime by denying responsibility, denying injury to the victim, and/or appealing to a higher loyalty for justification. More recently, Akers (2015) modified the theory (now referred to as “social structure social learning,” or SSSL) and specified that the larger social structure influences deviance through the aforementioned social learning mechanisms. That is, macro-level characteristics, such as differential social organization (i.e., exposure to deviant others), differential location in the social structure (e.g., class, gender), structural variables (e.g., anomie) and differential social location (e.g., ties to family, number of friends) influence deviance through social learning (Akers, 2015).

Regarding the application of social learning theory to hate crime, scholars suggest that research linking parental attitudes of prejudice to hate crime perpetration provides some evidence of social learning (Gerstenfeld, 2017). Further, many people join hate groups because their

friends or peers persuaded them (Turpin-Petrosino 2002). In addition, some research has tested more specific components of social learning theory to assess their applicability to biased offending. Bernatzky, Costello, and Hawdon (2021) claim support for SSSL theory in finding that online hate speech is associated with social location (ties to family, friends, and an online community), online associations with deviant others, and differential reinforcement (i.e., witnessing hate speech online).

Other scholars have examined whether Bandura's (1996) concept of moral disengagement, which resembles techniques of neutralization (Sykes & Matza, 1957), explains hate crime offending (Ozdemir, Giles & Ozdemir, 2020). Moral disengagement refers to a cognitive process that allows people to disregard the morality of their behavior in certain contexts so that they can commit immoral acts (Bandura et al., 1996). For example, analyzing adolescents in Switzerland and Germany, Wachs et al. (2022) found that moral disengagement, lack of empathy, and witnessing online hate speech were positively related to online hate speech perpetration. However, a study comparing predictors of ethnicity-based and non-ethnicity-based bullying found that moral disengagement was a common denominator across all perpetrators (i.e., for both biased and nonbiased bullying; Ozdemir et al., 2020). They also found that lack of affective empathy and negative immigrant attitudes distinguished youth who perpetrated ethnicity-based victimization from nonbiased offenders.

Also in the social learning tradition is research that considers how mechanisms of social learning operate once youth have been exposed to hate speech. These authors posit that the "witnessing-perpetrating" link among hate speech perpetrators can be understood through Bandura's (1989) social cognitive theory of observational learning, which they interpret as

suggesting that youth should be more likely to imitate hate speech they have witnessed because they believe doing so will help them fit in with peers.

Consistent with this idea, Wachs et al. (2021) analyzed data from 1,719 adolescents from 22 schools in Switzerland and found a positive relationship between witnessing and perpetrating in-person hate speech. This association was moderated by anti-hate speech norms and deviant peer pressure (as perceived by the student), such that the association was stronger at high levels of deviant peer pressure but weaker at high levels of anti-hate speech norms. Moreover, anti-hate speech norms were directly and negatively related to hate speech perpetration, whereas deviant peer pressure was directly and positively related to hate speech perpetration. The authors interpreted these findings as suggestive of a “social ecology” of problem behavior in schools and emphasize that class culture is important for understanding hate speech. In support of their argument that hate speech should be understood as a group phenomenon, they found that 13.6% of hate speech variance is explained by between-class differences (Wachs et al., 2021).

Similarly, Wachs et al. (2019) found that online perpetration of hate speech is associated with witnessing hate speech online among adolescents from eight countries, although they did not test moderation by social norms of deviant peers. This study also finds that certain types of coping strategies are negative related to online hate speech perpetration among those who witness hate speech. Specifically, problem-focused coping (e.g., telling the person to stop) and technical coping (e.g., reporting the person) are each related to a lower likelihood of perpetration. Wachs et al., (2022) also found that the witnessing-perpetration link for online hate speech is stronger for morally disengaged youth. Thus, the overall evidence suggests that social norms and witnessing hate speech are each be important for understanding bias-motivated victimization.

## **Biased Offending and Aggression: Contextual Explanations**

### ***Social Learning***

Research examining how school contexts affect bias-motivated victimization also draws from social learning theories. Generally, studies expect that the delinquent attitudes of other youth (and sometimes adults) in a school affect the perpetration of biased victimization either directly through mechanisms such as attitude transference (Sutherland, 1947) or indirectly through imitation, vicarious reinforcement, and group pressure to conform (Akers, 1985; Warr & Stafford, 1991). Like the indirect mechanisms in social learning theories, social norms theory (Perkins, & Berkowitz, 1986) suggests that youth are likely to behave in accordance with their perceived normative environments, even when the behavior is incongruent with their own beliefs. Thus, schools with social norms supportive of diversity acceptance should have lower rates of biased victimization, whereas schools with norms condoning identity-based aggression should have higher rates of bias-motivated victimization.

A substantial body of research finds that normative environments are important for the development of prejudiced beliefs and intercultural competence (e.g., Schwarzenhal, et al., 2020; Molina, & Wittig, 2006). However, few studies directly examine effects on bias-motivated victimization at school. Studies that do conduct such analyses generally support the expectations of social learning. For example, Ozdemir & Ozdemir (2020) examined whether the prevalence of ethnic-motivated bullying in Swedish schools was affected by “perceived inter-ethnic contact norms and cooperation” in the classroom. They found that more positive contact norms were associated with less ethnicity-based bullying perpetration among youth who had both positive attitudes towards immigrants and youth who had negative attitudes towards immigrants.

However, Ozdemir & Ozdemir (2020) found that *teachers'* attitudes had less of an impact on bias-based bullying. Specifically, student perceptions of teachers' negative response to bias victimization were associated with less ethnicity-based bullying perpetration only for students who had positive attitudes towards immigrants (Ozdemir & Ozdemir 2020). The authors interpreted this moderation effect as supportive of a "rich-get-richer" hypothesis (Merton 1968), or the expectation that an optimal social context is more beneficial for youth who are low risk. Conversely, this finding could be evidence against the "buffering effect" hypothesis, which expects that social context resources are most effective for high-risk youth (Cohen et al., 1985).

Studies of homophobic bullying (i.e., motivated by sexual orientation bias) have also examined whether accepting social norms influence bias-motivated victimization. Instead of asking youth about their perceptions of school norms about sexual orientation, however, these studies usually focus on the presence of services and programs that should serve as indicators of accepting social norms. For example, Gower et al. (2021) found that that GSA (i.e., gay-straight alliance) clubs at school and inclusive cafes/community services designated for LGBTQ youth are related to lower rates of school-based bullying of LGBTQ girls (but not boys). Meta-analyses (Marx & Kettrey, 2016) and longitudinal studies (Ioverno et al., 2016) have also found that GSAs have a negative association with homophobic victimization. However, not all research has found a protective effect of GSAs (Poteat et al., 2013), which could be due to differences across studies regarding the function and activities of the specific GSAs examined (Ioverno et al., 2021). In an analysis examining this variation in GSAs, Ioverno & Russel (2021) found that "high functioning" GSAs (i.e., reported by students as being effective) were most protective against homophobic bullying in schools perceived as having a negative school climate. Thus, the level of GSA functioning may be most important is schools that need it the most.

Another area of research investigating school effects on bias-motivated victimization from a social learning perspective focuses on litigation. Based on research suggesting that litigation has the potential to influence hate crime through social norms (Levy & Levy, 2017) Hatzenbuehler et al. (2022) examined whether litigation from a LGBTQ student against the school in California districts influenced school rates of homophobic bullying. This study found evidence of reductions in biased bullying of LGBTQ students after successful litigation for both the schools involved in the litigation and in the surrounding schools. However, when the litigation was not successful, there was no reduction in bullying, and there was some evidence of backlash from the litigation such that rates of bullying slightly increased.

### *Disciplinary Deterrence*

The litigation effect found by Hatzenbuehler et al. (2022) is generally interpreted as evidence that official school action influences bias-based victimization through the establishment of social norms for behavior. A similar strand of research examines whether official school policies explicitly banning bias-based victimization affect rates of homophobic victimization. Although most of the studies examining litigation and school policies assume that each reduce bias-based victimization through the promotion of school norms against such behavior, it is also possible that the policies have a deterrent effect. In other words, if such policies increase student perceptions of certain punishment, they might be less likely to engage in bias-based offending because the costs of offending have increased relative to the benefits (Beccaria [1764] 1963; Bentham [1789] 1970). Although most research on deterrence in the school context finds that punishment severity (i.e., zero tolerance policies), does not reduce victimization (Kang-Brown et al. 2013), the general deterrence literature outside of the school context suggests that certainty of apprehension and/or punishment can deter offending (Nagin, 2013).



Studies have found that explicit anti-bullying policies can reduce homophobic bullying (Boyland, Kirkeby, & Boyland, 2018; Kull, Greytak, Kosciw, & Villenas, 2016). For instance, Kull et al. (2016) examined survey and administrative school data across 2,952 school districts in the U.S. and found that schools with anti-bullying policies that prohibit sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression-based bullying were related to greater perceived safety had lower reports of homophobic bullying among LGBTQ students than schools with generic anti-bullying or no anti-bullying policies. However, it is not clear whether these findings were driven by social norms, by deterrence, or both. A few studies have examined whether the overall approach to discipline in a school affects bias-based victimization even when those policies do not explicitly prohibit bias-based victimization. Based on deterrence theory (Beccaria [1764] 1963; Bentham [1789] 1970), punitive school discipline, or discipline that emphasizes swift, certain, and severe punishment should be effective in reducing school crime.

On the other hand, non-punitive supportive school discipline might also reduce victimization because such policies could contribute to a positive school climate. The theory of communal social organization (Gottfredson et al., 2005) suggests that when the school context is organized such that students claim ownership over the school community and are invested in preserving it, students are less motivated to disrupt that community through engaging in crime. A sense of community decreases school crime because potential offenders are more likely to perceive that others would intervene in the event of a crime, similar to neighborhood collective efficacy (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997). Thus, schools that develop positive school climates and foster a sense of community should have lower rates of victimization, which should also extend to bias-based victimization.

Tests of communal social organization find that the clarity and fairness of school rules, a common measure of shared values and expectations, consistently relate to less school crime (Gottfredson and Gottfredson 1985; Nuttall and Kalesnik 1987; Welsh 2000), as do positive relationships with teachers (Khoury-Kassabri et al. 2004; Khoury-Kassabri, Benbenishty, and Astor 2005) and peers (Reis, Trockel, and Mulhall 2007; Stewart 2003; Welsh 2003). One study that specifically focused on bias-based victimization found that supportive but not punitive school discipline related to lower rates of homophobic bullying (Day et al., 2016). In this study, supportive school policies were defined as any initiative emphasizing helping students with social, emotional, and behavior problems, and providing conflict resolution or behavior management instruction. Day et al. (2016) also found that school connectedness (e.g., feeling close to people at school, teachers treat students fairly) was related to lower levels of homophobic bullying. Qualitative work also suggests that punitive school discipline policies may exacerbate bullying against LGBT youth (Snapp et al., 2015)

### ***Racial/Ethnic Context***

Literature on the association between school or classroom racial/ethnic composition and racial/ethnic- based bullying contains two competing hypotheses. The “distinctiveness postulate,” on the one hand, suggests that when minority groups are a small proportion of the schools’ racial/ethnic composition, minority students are vulnerable because of their uniqueness (McGuire et al, 1978). Thus, minority youth in low-diversity schools will not only be more readily noticeable but also more often be the targets of harassment. Allport’s (1954) contact hypothesis also suggests that low racial/ethnic diversity should relate to more bullying than high diversity because contact with other groups (i.e., in diverse contexts) decreases prejudice.

Similarly, Graham (2006) suggests that because power is more balanced across groups at higher levels of racial/ethnic diversity, rates of peer victimization are generally lower for all youth.

Some research in U.S. and European schools have supported the view that being a member of a minority race/ethnicity increases risk of discrimination (Bellemore et al., 2012; Juvonen et al., 2006; Closson et al, 2014; Agirdag et al. 2011; Felix and You (2011). For instance, Verkuyten and Thijs (2002) investigated the classroom-level factors affecting racial victimization in children of different ethnic backgrounds in The Netherlands. They found that ethnic minority children reported more incidences of racism when they were a numerical minority within their classroom. Studies have also found that Caucasian students are bullied more frequently when in the ethnic minority in a school, suggesting that low racial/ethnic diversity negatively impacts the numerical minority group regardless of that groups' position in the larger society (Fisher et al., 2015; Hanish & Guerra, 2000). Furthermore, Fisher et al. (2015) found that being a numerical minority race/ethnicity in a school, regardless of whether that group is powerful in larger society, relates to risk of both victimization in general and race-based victimization specifically (Fisher et al., 2015).

On the other hand, theories in the group threat tradition expect that the larger size of a minority racial/ethnic group is perceived as threatening to majority group members, provoking more aggression against the minority group (Sherif, 1966; Blalock, 1967). Specifically, intergroup conflict theory suggests that greater ethnic diversity will cause people to show preferences towards their in-group and discrimination against outgroups (Turner, Brown & Tajfel 1979). Thus, these perspectives suggest that schools with larger-sized minority groups that have high racial/ethnic diversity would have more, not less, bullying and discrimination against racial/ethnic minority youth. Some studies have found support for this expectation (Jansen et al,

2016; Tolsma et al. 2013). Vervoort et al. (2010) found that higher levels of school diversity led to more reports of bullying, but not necessarily aimed at the minority ethnic group in the class, suggesting that greater diversity could cause inter-ethnic conflict generally. In a test of the two competing theories, Durkin et al. (2012) analyzed discriminatory peer aggression a sample of 925 8-12-year-old youth in Britain and found more support to the group threat model, as youth reported more peer victimization in schools with more ethnic minorities.

A systematic review also found support for the expectation that racial/ethnic/diversity is a risk factor for victimization, although more consistently for studies in Europe that operationalized diversity as immigrants than for U.S. studies that measured the composition of racial/ethnic minorities (Basillci et al., 2022). Some scholars have suggested that the mixed findings in the literature regarding the role of racial/ethnic context for bias and nonbiased victimization can be explained by the highly varied national contexts that these studies take place in, differences in definitions and measurement of racial/ethnic minority (i.e., race focus in the U.S. and immigrant focus in Europe), and/or inadequate consideration of developmental differences in prejudice between youth at younger and older ages (Basilici et al., 2022).

Aside from the prevalence of victimization, the racial/ethnic context of a school could also be important for the impact of victimization. Bellemore et al. (2004) found that non-discriminatory victimization can be more harmful for youth who are in the racial/ethnic majority rather than minority in their classroom in part because ethnic majority students blame themselves for their victimization. Ethnic minority youth, on the other hand, may be less harmed by victimization when they are the minority because they blame the prejudice of the aggressor and do not attribute the victimization to themselves.

### *Community Context*

Criminological theories generally expect that school crime reflects the rate of crime in the communities they are in. For instance, social disorganization theory (Shaw & McKay, 1942) expects that in neighborhoods characterized by ethnic heterogeneity, low socioeconomic status, and residential mobility, institutions such as schools, families, and community organizations are unable to establish and enforce norms for behavior. Thus, both the school and the community surrounding the school should have high crime because collective efficacy and social control (the ability to prevent crime), are weak. In addition, communities that are crime-ridden provide ample opportunities for youth to be exposed to deviant peers, deviant attitudes, and deferential reinforcement, which would increase youth crime through social learning mechanisms (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1990).

If school crime reflects crime in the surrounding neighborhood, then levels of bias-motivated victimization in schools should reflect the amount of hate crime in the surrounding community. Hatzenbuehler, Duncan & Johnson (2015) find direct evidence of this effect: their study suggested that neighborhoods with sexual orientation hate crime had higher rates of sexual-orientation bullying in schools than neighborhoods without sexual orientation hate crime. This finding invites the question: what kinds of neighborhoods have high rates of hate crime, and are these neighborhoods the same as neighborhoods that have high rates of non-biased crime?

Much research has examined the community correlates of general crime. However, fewer studies have examined the community correlates of hate crime. The limited literature on the topic suggests that the community correlates of some types of bias crime differ from those for nonbiased crime. For instance, Gladfelter et al. (2017) found that although community level rates of racial hate crime in Pennsylvania aligned with the expectations of social disorganization

theory, anti-Black hate crimes occurred in predominantly White, affluent, stable neighborhoods. This study suggested that anti-Black hate crime (but not anti-White or anti-Hispanic hate crime) aligns with the theory of defended neighborhoods. Defended neighborhoods theory expects that economically advantaged, socially organized communities that feel threatened commit hate crime. Similarly, Lyons (2007) also found that the size of the White versus minority population predicted anti-Black hate crime (see also Bell, 2013), though anti-White hate crime occurred in disadvantaged neighborhoods (i.e., as expected by social disorganization theory).

Work focused on anti-sexual orientation bullying has found evidence that the community context conducive to this form of bullying differs from nonbiased crime. Specifically, a higher percentage of the population voting for the republican candidate in the 2016 election was related to anti-sexual orientation bullying (Hunag & Cornell 2017), and rural communities have the highest rates of biased victimization of LGBTQ students, even though nonbiased victimization is usually higher in urban rather than rural areas (Kosciw et al., 2009).

Even so, research supports the idea that, overall (i.e., not disaggregating by bias type) hate crimes occur in community contexts where non-biased crimes occur. For instance, Wenger & Lantz (2021) found that hate crimes in DC were spatially and temporally concentrated in neighborhoods where non-biased crime occurred, such that all hate crime occurred in only 3% of the spatial units examined. In addition, Grattet (2009) found that economic disadvantaged was related to both crime and bias crime. Moreover, both Gladfelter et al. (2017) and Lyons (2007) found that *anti-White* hate crime concentrated in the same areas as nonbiased crime. Taken together, these studies generally suggest that the neighborhood correlates of bias-motivated victimization may differ depending on bias type but are generally similar to nonbiased crime.

## **Applying Victimization Theory to Bias-Motivated Victimization**

### ***Lifestyle/Routine Activities and Opportunity***

Victimization risk is unevenly distributed across social and physical space. Decades of research demonstrates that certain individual characteristics and places are disproportionately associated with increased likelihood of victimization (Bunch, Clay-Warner, & Lei, 2015; Lauritsen & Carbone-Lopez, 2011; Wilcox & Land, 1996). Most explanations for risk concentration stem from the opportunity perspectives, which approach understanding crime and victimization from the standpoint of offenses rather than offenders. That is, opportunity perspectives focus on why crime events occur rather than why some people engage in crime. Opportunity theories are particularly well-suited for explaining victimization because they shift attention away from offender motivation and instead consider the multiple elements that determine whether a crime will occur, including victim characteristics.

The opportunity perspective originates in Cohen and Felson's (1979) analysis of national crime rates between the 1940s and 1970s. Cohen and Felson (1979) proposed that crime occurs when motivated offenders, attractive targets, and lack of capable guardianship converge in time and place. Diverging from mainstream criminological theory, this theory *assumes* the presence of offender motivation and suggests that crime rates are determined by social-structural changes that increase the number of crime-conducive situations. Cohen & Felson (1979) claimed that shifts in the social structure, such as female labor force participation and increased production of moveable goods, increased crime throughout the 1950s and 60s by increasing society-wide criminal opportunity (i.e., by increasing the number of people who spend time unguarded outside of the home, by increasing ownership of goods that are easy and profitable to steal, etc.).

Hindelang et al.'s (1978) lifestyle-exposure theory took a similar approach to explaining crime events. However, instead of theorizing at the macro-level, this articulation of opportunity theory emphasized that individual-level victimization risk is determined by one's involvement in activities and lifestyles that have a high risk of exposure to likely offenders. For example, spending time outside the home at night, especially in places where security and protection are low, increases an individual's victimization risk by increasing the likelihood of encountering motivated offenders in settings that lack guardianship (Hindelang et al., 1978). Similarly, engaging in delinquency should also increase risk through exposure to potential offenders.

A central claim of both the routine activities and lifestyle-exposure perspectives is that activities and/or lifestyle should mediate the association between demographic characteristics (i.e., age, gender, race/ethnicity) and victimization risk because demographic characteristics are associated with engaging in risky activities. In other words, the effect of the demographic characteristics on risk should be due to differential involvement in risky routine activities across social groups. Although much cross-sectional research has supported this expectation (e.g., Pratt et al., 2007), considerably fewer studies have used longitudinal data and formal tests of mediation to assess this claim (Bunch, Clay-Warner, Lei, 2015). Even so, studies generally do find evidence of at least partial mediation, especially for the effects of age and gender (Lauritsen, Sampson, & Laub, 1991).

Following an influential integration of the routine activities and life-style exposure theories in Cohen et al. (1981), most work in the opportunity perspective draws on both frameworks and considers them related components of one theory. The body of work testing this theory strongly supports its central tenants: studies find that the number of nights spent outside the home and the frequency of public transit use increases risk of victimization, whereas home security and self-



defense decrease risk of victimization (Miethe & McDowall, 1993; Miethe & Meier, 1994; Tseloni et al 2004). Risky activities among college students, such as drinking, partying, and living in male or co-ed dorms is also associated with increased risk of victimization (Fisher & Stewart, 2007; Mustiane & Tewksbury, 1999). Some work even finds that opportunity is applicable to the online setting, as cybervictimization appears to be related to engaging in risky online activities (Pratt, Holtfreter, & Reisig, 2010). It is worth noting, however, that lifestyle/routine activities theory is less applicable to certain forms of crime, such as domestic violence and child maltreatment (see Pratt & Turanovic, 2016).

Extensions of opportunity theory to adolescent victimization emphasize that unstructured socializing, or time spent with peers away from adult supervision, increases youths' victimization risk because it increases situational crime opportunity (Henson et al. 2010; Tillyer et al. 2017; Turanovic et al. 2017). Consistent with this expectation, research finds that involvement in after-school extracurricular activities is associated with increased victimization risk, potentially because adult supervision is lower than during school hours, which reduces capable guardianship (Burrow & Apel 2008; Peguero & Popp 2012; Peterson et al. 2017).

However, there is evidence that some risky activities are riskier for some students more so than for others. For example, the effect of extracurricular activity involvement on victimization risk is moderated by race/ethnicity (Tillyer & Tillyer, 2016; Peguero, Popp, and Koo, 2015). That is, being involved in extracurricular activities is associated with elevated risk of victimization for Latino/a students and Asian students but is protective against risk for White students (Peguero, Popp, and Koo, 2015). Similarly, Tillyer & Tillyer (2016) find that factors that are protective against victimization risk for White youth, such as parental attachment and school attachment, are less protective for Black and Hispanic youth. They also find that low-

level delinquent behaviors, such as skipping school or substance use, are riskier for Black and Hispanic youth (in terms of victimization risk) than they are for White youth, which they attribute to different environments that the behavior takes place in. Another explanation for the moderation of risky activities by race/ethnicity points to the stereotyping of racial/ethnic minorities as more commonly participating in certain activities over others. Youth who participate in activities not perceived as stereotypical, it is suggested, may be vulnerable to victimization (Peguero, Popp & Koo, 2015).

Self-control theory (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990) is often understood by scholars as complementary to the opportunity perspective in that self-control is thought to be a reason why some people are more likely than others to engage in risky activities and lifestyles (Hay & Forrest, 2008; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 2017; Schreck, Stewart, & Fisher, 2006). If this is the case, risky lifestyles and routine activities should mediate the effect of low self-control on victimization risk. In support of this view, a meta-analysis found that low self-control affects victimization risk, and that some of this effect operates through routine activities (Pratt & Turanovic, 2014). However, research also finds that low self-control affects victimization risk directly (i.e., net of routine activities), which suggests that low self-control is a risk factor itself (Tillyer et al., 2010; Kulig et al., 2017).

Regarding the application of opportunity theory to bias-motivated victimization, the literature generally suggests that risky activities and lifestyle choices that relate to nonbiased victimization also predict bias-motivated victimization. For instance, greater participation in drinking or nighttime activities is associated with a higher risk of experiencing hate crime (Van Kesteren, 2016; Waldner & Berg, 2008; Ellonen et al., 2021). However, there are some activities that are expected to increase risk of bias-motivated victimization more so than nonbiased victimization.

Specifically, engaging in religious activities or organizations should increase risk because doing so clearly identifies individuals belonging to a group that hate crime offenders may wish to target (Ellonen et al., 2021; Mcnealy & Overstreet, 2018). Similarly, involvement in gay/lesbian organizations and events should increase risk of anti-gay violence, as was found in Waldner and Berg (2008). In addition, some scholars find that inter-racial socializing increases risk of being victimized by hate crime, presumably because it increases exposure to different racial/ethnic groups and, therefore, potential offenders (McNeely & Overstreet, 2018).

Some scholars have argued that a broader version of target suitability, referred to as “target congruence,” is a useful way to think about risk for specific forms of victimization, such as intimate partner violence, familial violence, and hate crime victimization (Finkelhor & Asidigian 1996; Ellonen et al., 2021). Target congruence suggests that some personal characteristics directly affect victimization risk (i.e., not through lifestyle variables) because they match up with the offender’s motivations (Elvey, & McNeeley, 2019). Target congruence can involve target antagonism (the victim’s characteristics provoke aggression), target vulnerability (victims are unable to protect themselves from victimization), and target gratifiability (victims have qualities that offenders want to use; Finkelhor & Asidigian 1996).

For example, a study of adolescent victimization that assessed target congruence found that sexual victimization and child sexual abuse are especially likely to be experienced by highly attractive adolescents, although being highly attractive was associated with all types of victimization examined (Savolainen, Brauer, & Ellonen, 2020). Studies of intimate partner violence have also used the concept of target congruence to understand victimization risk (Elvey & McNeeley, 2019; Sween & Reynolds, 2017). For hate crime, personal characteristics such as

race/ethnicity, sexual identity, and gender could provoke target antagonism, particularly if the offender has strong feelings of animosity towards a particular social group (Ellonen et al., 2021).

In addition, the concept of capable guardianship in routine activities theory may also differ for bias versus non-biased victimization because teachers and school personnel, who are the primary guardians in schools, may be less willing to intervene to stop or prevent certain types of bias-motivated victimization. For instance, teachers who are not LGBTQ friendly may be less willing to step in and protect or prevent anti-LGBTQ discrimination (Greytak & Kosciw, 2014). It is also possible that some teachers find that having immigrant students is a challenge to effective classroom management, which could result in less bonding between students and teachers for immigrant youth and less guardianship from teachers.

### ***The Victim-Offender Overlap***

The term *victim-offender overlap* refers to the likelihood that victims are also offenders and, conversely, offenders are – or will become – victims (Wolfgang, 1957). The victim-offender overlap is robustly supported with empirical work in criminology (e.g., Lauritsen, Sampson & Laub, 1991, see Jennings et al., 2012 for review) and is a hallmark of the peer victimization and bullying literatures as well (i.e., bully-victims; Haynie et al., 2001). Explanations for the overlap typically point to the lifestyle and routine activities theories. That is, risky lifestyles should increase opportunity for both criminal offending and victimization because situations of low guardianship – especially surrounded by deviant peers-- encourages deviance, often at the expense of other people who are also involved in risky activities. Moreover, certain risky lifestyles may be especially deviance-provoking for adolescents. For example, youths engaging in unstructured socializing without guardianship is an ideal opportunity for offending because the social rewards of doing so are elevated with an audience (Osgood et al., 1996).

The link between routine activities and self-control theory (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990) elucidates one potential explanation for why some individuals are at a greater risk of both victimization and offending than other individuals. Termed the *population heterogeneity* hypothesis, this perspective expects that people with certain personal characteristics, such as low self-control, self-select into risky lifestyles and routine activities, which increases their risk of both victimization and offending (Forde & Kennedy, 1997; Piquero et al 2005). Other than low-self-control, scholars have also suggested that personality traits and broader time-stable factors, such as family characteristics, increase the likelihood that certain people will be engage in risky activities and be both victims and offenders, net of the causal effect of victimization on offending (Fagan et al., 1987). Furthermore, the population heterogeneity hypothesis has also been used to explain the victimization-revictimization link, or the increased odds that people who have experienced victimization will be victimized again (Ruback et al., 2014).

However, perspectives drawing from general stain theory (Agnew 2002; Agnew 2017) posit a *state dependence* hypothesis, which suggests that victimization plays a causal role in the victimization to offending (and revictimization) link. Specifically, scholars suggest that victimization causes negative emotionality, which can cause changes in routine activities as a form of coping (Ruback et al., 2014) or protective behavior (Ousey et al., 2008). In support of this perspective, scholars find that emotions such as anger, fear, and depression mediate the effect of victimization on offending (Hay & Evans, 2006; Maschi et al., 2008).

A related hypothesis suggests that victimization leads to retaliatory violence, particularly in disadvantaged contexts where subcultural values such as “street codes” require that victims respond to victimization with violence (Anderson, 1999; Stewart et al., 2006; Singer 1986). However, some studies find that the effect of victimization on offending is weaker in

disadvantaged than advantaged contexts, presumably due to dilution of each risk factor when several risk factors are present (Posick & Zimmerman, 2015).

Empirical tests of these competing hypotheses for the victim-offender overlap find evidence of both population heterogeneity and state dependence, though the portion of the effect that is due to state dependence is usually smaller relative to the effect of population heterogeneity (Ruback et al, 2014; Wittebrood & Nieuwebeeta, 2000; Lauritsen & Davis Quinet, 1995; Sullivan et al., 2016). However, Ousey et al. (2008) found no evidence of state dependence once population heterogeneity and reciprocal effects were accounted for, and even suggested that victimization may reduce the odds of future offending through a reduction in risky activities.

Even so, most studies find that although time-stable characteristics like low self-control mediate the effect of victimization on offending, the mediation does not entirely account for the effect (Berg & Loeber 2011; Lauritsen & Laub, 2007). Thus, although research strongly indicates that low self-control is important for explaining the victim-offender overlap, it seems to also be the case the victimization can incite changes in victims that increase risk of offending. To complicate matters, Turanovic et al. (2013) suggests that self-control *moderates* the association between victimization and offending, such that individuals with low self-control are more likely to engage in maladaptive coping following victimization, which puts them at greater risk of offending. In sum, the extensive body of work on the victim-offender overlap has established that the existence of the victim-offender overlap, and the mechanisms behind appear to be both causal and spurious to between-individual differences.

In terms of the victim-offender overlap for hate crime, we might expect that the *state dependence* explanation has more of an effect for hate crime (versus nonbiased crime) victims because evidence suggests that bias-motivated crime is more harmful for victims than nonbiased

victimization (Iganski, 2001). Thus, bias crime victims might resort to maladaptive coping strategies more often than nonbiased crime victims because their hardships and negative emotionality are simply greater. In addition, the *population heterogeneity* perspective also can be viewed as suggesting that the victim-offender overlap exists for hate crime victims. As many of the predictors of hate crime victimization are similar to those for nonbiased victimization (e.g., such as spending time outside in public), which are also conducive to offending, it is possible that hate crime victims are also likely to offend.

Empirically, there is some evidence of the victim-offender overlap for hate crime victims, in that a few studies have found that hate crime victims are likely to be offenders and to engage in risky routine activities. However, the body of work that examines the victim-offender overlap for hate crime is very small. Ellonen et al. (2021) finds that engaging in hate crime offending (measured as perpetrating bias-motivated bullying, crime, or threats) and other forms of delinquency are each positively associated with hate crime victimization among Finnish adolescents net of sociodemographic and routine activities indicators (e.g., nights out per week, involvement in religious/ethnic organizations). McNeeley & Overstreet (2018) also find that hate crime victimization is predicted by (any) criminal offending, though they do not measure bias-motivated offending.

It is also possible that bias-motivated victimization is predicted by *bias-motivated* perpetration (as opposed to any type of offending), though very few studies consider this possibility. For example, Hatchel et al. (2020) find that homophobic bullying victimization is related to homophobic bullying perpetration, such that perpetration was related to being in their “high-decreasing” victim group. The authors of this study speculate that victims become perpetrators to gain power and social acceptance, as learned from their normative environments.

It could also be the case that victims of bias-motivated victimization perpetrate the same behavior in retaliation, as implied by arguments about hate crime causing inter-ethnic conflict (see *Wisconsin v. Mitchell*, 1993).

### ***School-Level Prevention***

Theories of how schools affect nonbiased victimization are useful for understanding how schools affect bias-motivated victimization because different forms of crime tend to all cluster in certain streets, neighborhoods, schools, and institutions (Weisburd, 2015). Thus, schools with high rates of general victimization should also have high rates of bias-motivated victimization. Multi-contextual opportunity theory (MCOT; Wilcox, Land & Hunt, 2003; Wilcox & Tillyer, 2018) is a comprehensive explanation of between-school variation in victimization because it considers how opportunity at multiple units of analysis account for victimization risk.

Multi-contextual opportunity theory posits the individual-level factors in routine activities/lifestyle theory should be integrated with expectations of crime opportunity at broader levels of analysis (i.e., the school). In the words of Wilcox and colleagues: “individuals or places characterized by certain levels of crime opportunity are nested within broader environmental units—such as block groups or neighborhoods—which can also be characterized in terms of situational opportunity” (Wilcox & Cullen, 2018: P. 136).

A central proposition of MCOT is that multiple levels of criminal opportunity interact with each other, such that overall risk of victimization emerges from risk at various levels. In the school context, a student’s overall risk of victimization is determined by individual level risk factors (routine activities/lifestyle, target suitability, bonds to teachers and peers/guardianship) as well as factors that determine school-level opportunity, such as school prevention programs, exposure to crime and disorder, the level of guardianship, the regime of school rules, and school



climate factors (e.g., school efficacy). According to MCOT, it is expected that 1) individual and contextual determinants of opportunity each directly influence victimization and 2) individual level factors are moderated by school-level factors, such that high-risk youth should have even greater risk in high-risk school environments.

Drawing on MCOT to situate analyses of school prevention programs, Tillyer et al. (2011) found that individual level self-reported criminal behavior, associations with delinquent peers, and involvement in school athletics were each positively related to victimization, whereas attachment to school and peers was protective against victimization. Most school-level factors, however, did not affect victimization rates (except for school level delinquency). The authors interpreted these findings as implying that in addition to instituting school-level changes, school programs should target youth who have a high risk at the individual level. In other words, school prevention should incorporate opportunity reduction at both the individual and school level, or both “risky people” and “risky places” (i.e., multilevel programming; Tillyer et al. 2011, P. 268).

Another important component of multi-contextual opportunity theory is that individual risk is moderated by the school environment, such that risk is amplified in settings where school-level risk is also high. An alternative explanation for the interaction of school and student factors is that individual-level risk is less independently important in schools where risk is high for all youths (i.e., the saturation hypothesis). That is, personal risk factors like routine activities may be less predictive of victimization risk in settings where there are numerous additional factors operating to influence risk. In support of MCOT, Tillyer, Wilcox, and Fissel (2018) find that the effect of self-control on repeat victimization is stronger in schools with high school-level risk. Similarly, Kärnä et al. (2010) find that the effect of student risk factors of victimization (i.e.,

social anxiety) are stronger in schools with normative environments supportive of aggression (see also Saarento et al., 2013).

Although the literature seems to suggest that the effect of individual-level risk factors on victimization is heightened in high-risk schools, evidence does not suggest that the effect of victimization on offending is heightened in high-risk (vs low-risk) schools. For instance, Posick and Zimmerman (2015) find that the effect of victimization on offending is weaker in disadvantaged schools with high risk. This finding contrasted with expectations, as the authors of this study expected that retaliatory violence would be greater in disadvantages schools with high risk (i.e., which would imply that the effect of victimization on offending is stronger in high-risk schools). Posick & Zimmerman (2015) interpreted their findings as suggesting that risk is diluted in high-risk schools due to the confluence of several simultaneous risk factors. They also speculated that victimization may have less of an effect on youth in disadvantaged schools due to de-sensitization to violence, which might reduce the negative emotionality associated with victimization. Zaykowski & Gunter (2012) also hypothesized that school climate would moderate the victim-offender overlap, although their study finds that indicators of school climate (e.g., the school social system) do not moderate the effect of victimization on offending.

In sum, research clearly establishes that both victimization and offending are highly concentrated among a subset of students, so school prevention programs should take a multi-level approach and consider how to reduce criminal opportunity. School victimization prevention should also use strategies that are aimed specifically at addressing the needs of the highest-risk youth. Like the risk-needs-responsivity model of reentry and rehabilitation programming (Bonta & Andrews, 2007), effective programming will identify the highest risk youth, determine what are the needs of these high-risk youth, and find solutions narrowly tailored to those risks.

Moreover, similar to research on juvenile rehabilitation, studies of school programs find that cognitive behavioral strategies that help youth develop social competency and skills can be effective in reducing school-based crime and victimization (e.g., Cook, Na & Gottfredson, 2010).

### ***Social Status and Aggression***

As network data and techniques have become increasingly available, researchers have been better able to test theories of aggression, bullying, and school victimization that diverge from traditional psychological explanations for bullying which focus on individual-level factors, such as antisocial personality traits (Faris & Felmlee, 2014). Specifically, researchers have examined the social status of victims and perpetrators of bullying, with the expectation that gaining social status (and the potential material and social resources that come along with it) motivates bullying (Volk et al., 2015). For example, Faris & Felmlee (2014) find that high peer status in a social network is positively associated with engaging in peer aggression (Faris & Felmlee, 2014), at least until a pivotal point of status is reached, suggesting that adolescents use aggression as a form of “social climbing.” Van der Ploeg et al. (2020) find that bullying perpetration is associated with increased popularity (see also Sentse et al., 2015), however, a recent meta-analysis found only mixed support for the proposition that bullies have high social status (Wiertsema et al., 2023). Given scholarship proposing that bias-motivated aggression is perpetrated to establish social dominance (Perry, 2001), the social status of the victim and the perpetrator – as well as the status of their social group, as indicated by personal characteristics – may be important for biased aggression.

That being said, most studies of discriminatory peer victimization have not examined the interplay between this form of bullying and popularity. Studies that have been conducted on the topic are supportive of the expectation that perpetrators of discriminatory bullying are more

popular than their peers. For example, one study found that displaying sexual orientation prejudice was associated with popularity for males but not females (Poteat 2015). Given that popular adolescents may have the ability to set standards for acceptable or admirable behavior within a classroom (Dijkstra & Gest, 2015), it is important for research and theory on biased bullying to consider whether and how status and popularity motivate the behavior.

## Chapter 3. IMPACTS OF BIASED VICTIMIZATION

### **Documenting the Harms of Hate**

#### *Policy Importance*

Much of the legal foundation justifying hate crime laws rests on the assumption that crimes motivated by bias inflict greater harm than crimes not motivated by bias (*Wisconsin v Mitchell*, 1993). It is therefore important for research to establish whether this assumption of greater harm is empirically supported. Furthermore, hate crime laws are not universally endorsed. Critics argue that they “punish thoughts” because additional punishment is granted based on the offender’s reasons for committing the crime (i.e., prejudiced beliefs; Gey, 1997; Hurd 2004). This debate over hate crime laws (and analogous school policies) should be informed by scientific assessments of the harms of bias-motivated victimization.

Opponents of hate crime laws argue that additional criminal punishment based on the offenders’ reasons for committing the act (e.g., dislike of people who belong to a particular religion) equates to the government promoting certain ideologies or opinions over others. As the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees the freedom of thought as well as free expression of those thoughts, even thoughts most people would consider abhorrent (see *R.A.V. v St Paul*; *US v Schwimmer*, 1929), it is argued that hate crime laws broach constitutionally granted rights. A related criticism is that any government action interfering with the freedom of expression will have a “chilling effect” (*Lamont v Postmaster General* 1965). This “chilling effect” is the possibility that censorship of one form of expression could cause people to fear that other forms of expression will also be censored, thereby reducing free exchange of ideas. Once the government can punish citizens – or schools can punish students – because they express

unpopular opinions (e.g., racism), people may become unwilling to engage in free expression of ideas more generally.

In *Wisconsin v. Mitchell* (1993), the Supreme Court countered these claims against hate crime laws with three arguments. First, the Court argued that there is legal precedent condoning similar practices. Many criminal sentencing practices already consider defendant motive when determining punishment even when hate crime laws are not invoked, such as when a murder is committed due to racial hatred. In addition, antidiscrimination laws consider it to be a violation of the law when an action is taken against a person due to their social characteristics. Thus, the law already does “punish thoughts” in certain circumstances, and these practices are not frequently challenged.

Second, the Court argued that hate crime laws do not punish the thoughts themselves, they only punish actions that flow from those thoughts (see also *Oregon v. Plowman*, 1992). In other words, prejudiced beliefs are not punished unless a crime has been committed based on those beliefs. Such arguments have also been made in reference to hateful campus speech. Only when such speech incites violence does it become impermissible. Third, the court argued that hate crimes cause substantially greater harm to individuals and to society than non-hate crimes, which warrants greater punishment.

### ***Layers of Harm***

Paul Iganski’s 2001 article is probably the most frequently referenced academic articulation of how hate crime causes more harm than other crime. The article draws from interviews with various “elite” informants in Boston in 1999 – a time when Massachusetts had extensive hate crime legislation – on the question of whether and why hate crime laws are justified. The informants were from communities that had a “stake in hate debate,” or had

problems with discriminatory crime, and consisted of individuals from police departments, the prosecutors' offices, victim support agencies, and academics (Iganski, 2001: 627). Iganski (2001) details the several waves of harm inflicted by hate crime as described by respondents. These waves are depicted (below) in Figure 3-1.

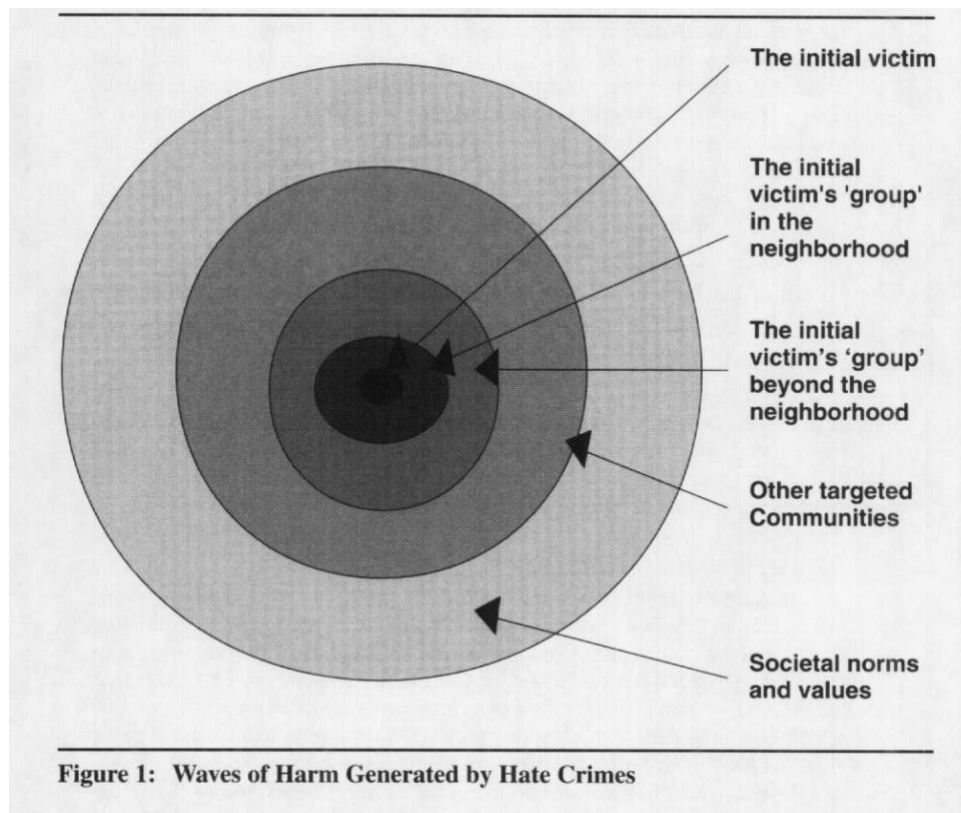


Figure 3-1: Waves of Harm Generated by Hate Crimes  
*Source:* Iganski (2001).

The first wave of harm is to the direct (or initial) victim of the crime, who may experience greater impacts from the hate crime than they would have had they been victimized by an identical crime not motivated by bias. Most respondents perceived that hate crime causes greater emotional and psychological harm by virtue of the victim being targeted because of their social identity, a trait that victims neither can nor would wish to change. In the words of Iganski and

Lagou (2015), “it is the values of the attacker striking at the core of the victim’s identity, which hurt more” (Iganski & Lagou, 2015: 1711).

The second wave of harm is experienced by the victim’s immediate social group in the neighborhood or community. The immediate community is harmed because hearing about the crime and its discriminatory basis has a high potential to anger people who knew the victim and who share the social characteristics of the victim. The social group of the victim is especially likely to be impacted because the act is an affront to the dignity of the victims’ identity. Similarly, the third wave of harm is inflicted on the victim’s social group beyond people they know personally (e.g., other people of the same race/ethnicity). These individuals are referred to as distal or indirect victims in the literature.

Presumably, people who share the victim’s social characteristics are affected because they perceive that if the victim was chosen because of their social characteristics, other people who share those characteristics could be chosen next. Because of these far-reaching impacts of hate crime, hate crimes have been referred to as “message crimes” because they send a message to both the victim and to other members of the social group that their traits mark them as inferior to others (Lawrence, 1999). As noted in *Wisconsin v. Mitchell* (1993), hate crime has a high potential to incite community violence and unrest if the victims’ community (in the broad or narrow sense) is angered and seeks retaliation.

Fourth, other communities that are the targets of prejudice could be affected by hearing about a hate crime of someone who does not share their social characteristics because they may perceive that if bigotry is being acted upon against other groups, their own group may be next. For example, a homosexual man who hears about an anti-Black hate crime nearby may wonder if he will be targeted in the future. The fifth and final wave of harm is the damage done to societal



norms and values promoting diversity inclusion, multiculturalism, and democratic principles of equality. If hate crimes are committed commonly, citizens (or students in a school) may believe that such discriminatory behavior is acceptable and even condoned in their society.

### **Harms to Direct Victims**

Researchers have endeavored to demonstrate the first wave of harm empirically through studies comparing impacts for victims of biased versus nonbiased crime. Harms to direct victims can be categorized as psychological (e.g., anxiety, depression, fear, trauma), physical (e.g., injury, severity of violence), social (e.g., withdrawal from social activities), and criminal (i.e., increasing risk of justice involvement). Studies assess mean differences in outcomes between victims of biased versus nonbiased victimization as well as analyze whether differences in other characteristics of the incidents (e.g., weapon use) explain the impact differential. In addition, other work examines whether bias-motivated victimization harms some victims more than others (i.e., moderation by social characteristics). Finally, there is some work on protective factors that shield victims from the deleterious consequences of bias-motivated victimization.

### ***Psychological Harms***

Overall, the literature suggests that victims of bias-motivated crime suffer greater psychological harms than victims of nonbiased crime. For instance, Ehrlich et al. (1992) analyzed national telephone survey data from victims of “ethno-violence,” or crime related to the victims’ race or ethnicity, and compared their reported symptoms to the symptoms experienced by nonvictims, personal crime victims, and group defamation victims. Results indicated that bias crime victims on average experienced a greater number of psychophysiological symptoms than did other types of victims. Bias crime victims also experienced some kinds of behavioral changes more frequently than other victims, such as sleeping problems and interpersonal difficulties. A

similar analysis by Ehrlich and colleagues (1994) in the workplace context also found that prejudiced insults in the workplace was associated with a greater number of psychological symptoms than non-biased insults.

Herek and colleagues (1999; 1997; 2002) found evidence of greater psychological harm for LGBTQ individuals of bias (vs. nonbiased) crime in California. These studies found that LGBTQ bias crime victims who experienced the victimization in the past 5 years were more likely to experience psychological impacts such as depression, trauma, and anger than LGBTQ victims of a crime that was not perceived to be motivated by bias. In addition, Herek et al. (1997) found that victims of bias crime experience impacts for a longer period of time. However, these studies recruited their sample of victims at pride and LGBTQ events, which skews the sample towards overrepresenting individuals who are open about their sexuality.

Using official crime data, McDevitt, Balboni, Garcia & Gu (2001) analyzed the consequences of victimization for victims who experienced biased versus non-biased crime (excluding child abuse and domestic abuse) in Boston between 1992 and 1997. McDevitt and colleagues (2001) found that bias crime victims scored highest on the Horowitz scale's measures of the psychological impacts related to intrusiveness. Specifically, bias crime victims were "more nervous, more depressed, have more trouble concentrating, think about the incident when they do not mean to, and feel like not wanting to live any longer more often than nonbias crime victims" (McDevitt et al., 2001: 709). In addition, feelings of safety were reduced to a greater extent for bias victims, and loss of employment was more likely. On the other hand, protective behavioral reactions following the incident, such as changing walking patterns and taking greater precautions, did not differ between bias and non-bias crime victims, nor did medical treatment.

More recently, an analysis of racially motivated versus non-biased crime in England and Wales (Iganski and Lagou, 2015) also supported the claim that hate crime victims as a group were more likely to suffer internalized (anxiety, depression, fear, difficulty sleeping, crying, loss of confidence, feelings of vulnerability), externalized (anger and annoyance), and both internalized and externalized reactions compared to victims of non-biased crimes. However, this study also found notable variation within the bias-crime victim group in these impacts. Specifically, impacts varied across demographic characteristics (e.g., race, gender), and the authors concluded that some victims of racially motivated crime experienced fewer reactions to victimization than victims of nonbiased crime. There are several additional studies that have documented the negative psychological impact of hate crimes (e.g., Paterson et al., 2019; Bell & Perry, 2015), though these studies do not provide a comparison to impacts of nonbiased crime.

There is also evidence to suggest that the psychological impacts of *non-criminal* victimization (e.g., bullying, peer harassment, hate speech) are also greater when motivated by bias than when not motivated by bias. For instance, Russell et al. (2012) analyzed a sample of youth in Wisconsin and California and found that biased bullying is related more strongly to mental health problems, substance use, and truancy than non-biased bullying. Another study found that bias-based bullying is related to higher rates of school absenteeism than nonbiased bullying, which may have led to a loss of funds in California because school districts receive funds based on student attendance (Baams, Talmage, & Russell, 2017).

Using nationally representative data, Turner et al. (2015) found that bias is an aggravating element of peer victimization episodes and is associated with increased likelihood of trauma, although this effect was greatly reduced once other incident characteristics were accounted for (i.e., power-imbalance, victim injury). Moreover, a substantial body of work suggests that

discrimination is related to mental health problems in youth (Brody et al., 2006; Greene et al., 2006; Sellers et al., 2006; Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007). However, like research that examines impacts among only hate crime victims, these studies cannot speak directly to the issue of whether incidents motivated by bias are more harmful than those not motivated by bias.

### ***Physical Harms***

Studies have found that bias-motivated crime is more likely to involve severe violence and injury than non-biased crime (Masucci and Langton, 2017; Messner et al., 2004; Garcia et al., 1999; Martin 1996). However, not all research is suggestive of greater injury for bias crime. Pezerlla & Fetzer (2017), for instance, find that bias crimes analyzed as a group do not differ from nonbiased crimes in terms of injury, although some specific types of bias crimes (i.e., anti-lesbian did have higher rates of injury than nonbiased crime.

It is possible that these conflicting findings are due to differences in the controls included across studies. That is, bias-crimes may differ for nonbiased crime in terms of other elements (e.g., number of co-offenders, location of the crime), and it could be that these elements explain the worse injuries rather than the bias motivation itself. A few studies have tested whether this is the case. Malcolm & Lantz (2021) used NIBRS data to examine whether hate crimes are more harmful for victims in terms of severity of violence and victim injury. They then tested whether these differences are attributable to more frequent weapon use among hate crime offenders. Results indicated that hate crimes are more severe and violent than non-hate crimes, but this difference was not attributed to weapon use. In fact, they found that the effect of weapon use on victim injury was *weaker* for bias crimes compared to non-bias crimes. Thus, they concluded that weapon use did not explain the greater severity of bias crimes (Malcolm & Lantz, 2019).

Consistent with this finding, other studies have also found that weapon use is less common among hate crime offenders (Pezerlla & Fetzer, 2017).

Lantz & Kim (2019) examined whether this greater severity of violence for bias crimes was attributed to the presence of multiple offenders. They found evidence suggesting that although bias-crimes are more likely to have co-offenders, and co-offenders are associated with greater severity of violence for all crimes (bias and non-bias crimes), this effect was not attributable to multiple offenders. However, although studies of youth have also found that biased incidents are likely to involve multiple offenders (Jones et al., 2018), research has not assessed the influence of multiple offenders on severity of harm for non-criminal biased events involving youth.

Taken together, the authors of these studies interpret their findings as suggesting that the greater severity of violence/injury for biased crime is likely due to the different motivation of offenders itself, not other elements about the crime. That is, the violence is greater because hate crime offenders are more likely to dehumanize their victims and feel less compassion or empathy for them (Lantz & Kim, 2019). This interpretation is certainly plausible. However, research has not thoroughly tested whether other elements of hate crimes explain the greater impacts (i.e., location of the crime, victim-offender relationship, use of alcohol/drugs), so more research is needed before definitive conclusions can be drawn.

### ***Social Harms***

Another factor distinguishing prejudicial victimization from other types of victimization is that victims of marginalized groups (who hate crime usually targets) may have fewer social supports to help them cope than other groups. Lacking options for healthy coping in the face of victimization could increase the odds that victims turn to maladaptive coping mechanisms (e.g., alcohol use), which can lead to offending and/or re-victimization (Ruback et al., 2014).

Much of the work on social support among hate crime victims has focused on the LGBTQ community. In a recent study of LGBTQ immigrant hate crime victims in Florida, Kutateladze (2021) found that victims often changed their residence, socially withdrew from their friendship networks and social events, and began “acting straight” following their victimization. The author suggested that these impacts may be especially harmful because immigrants are already limited in the neighborhoods they can live in, and LGBTQ people generally have fewer familiar and social supports, so disruption of social networks could be especially damaging for them (Kutateladze 2021, see Kelin & Golub, 2016). Moreover, studies find that transgender people are especially likely to feel that family, friends, and the police would not support them in dealing with hate victimization (Walters, et al., 2020).

Regarding racist hate crime, Funnell (2015) provides ethnographic evidence that some victims restrict their daily routines, feel that aspects of their identity have been altered, and experience changes in their social relationships after experiencing a victimization incident near their home. Funnell (2015) argues that victim reactions to identity-based victimization resemble Goffman’s (1961) description of “mortification of the self,” or the role dispossession among inmates and other institutionalized people. This analysis suggest that hate crime victims may feel more isolated following the victimization incident than other types of victimization, presumably because there is nothing they feel they can do to prevent it in the future. A study examining the attributions that children make about a hypothetical victimization experience could also support this conclusion, as it found that children who attributed victimization to their race were less likely than other youth to seek out support from friends and teachers but more likely to engage in nonchalance (i.e., pretend not to care; Visconti et al., 2013).

Social harms may be especially pronounced for students who experience victimization, as belongingness is integral for youths' well-being, healthy coping strategies, and academic engagement (Fong et al., 2015). Experiencing bias-based language, both as the target and through exposure at school, is associated with worse teacher-student and student-student school relationships, especially for boys (Ogg et al., 2021). Poteat & Espelage (2007) also found evidence of lower school belongingness for male victims of (homophobic) biased victimization compared to victims of nonbiased victimization even controlling for prior levels of school belongingness. Thus, research suggests that bias-based victimization may influence individual youths' wellbeing and educational achievement as well as their schools' overall climate.

### ***Justice System Involvement***

Much work on the pathway from school violence to justice system involvement focuses on youth who are perpetrators in the incident, victimization can also increase the odds of justice system involvement either (1) directly through responses to victimization or (2) indirectly through school absenteeism. Regarding the first, youth who are victimized may retaliate, turn to aggressive coping strategies, or be blamed for their own victimization by staff. Regarding the second, youth may become generally disengaged in school, leading to lower attachment, less social control, and higher odds of delinquency. Research has supported the association between adolescent victimization and offending/justice system involvement ((Hoffman, Phillips, Daigle, & Turner, 2016; Turner, Phillips, Tigri, Williams, & Hartman, 2016).

If bias-based victimization is more severe than nonbiased victimization, we might expect that youth who are victimized in this way might be especially likely to be involved in the justice system as perpetrators. Furthermore, as noted by Palmer & Greytak (2017) in their study of justice system involvement among LGBTQ youth, teachers may be especially likely to blame

LGBTQ youth for their own victimization. Palmer & Greytak (2017) find that victimization based on LGBTQ identity is associated with school disciplinary and justice system involvement, and that this path is mediated both through student victims' avoidant reactions as well as school staff's responses to the victimization. They suggest that the SPP and harsh discipline in schools is setting many LGBTQ youth on a path to prison and to negative outcomes later in life. Although they do not provide comparison to victimization not motivated by LGBTQ and do not include non-LGBTQ youth in their study, this work provides evidence that bias-based victimization among LGBTQ youth can lead to exclusionary school discipline and justice system involvement.

The authors argue that these results show that the school plays a role in replicating existing hierarchies because schools and school staff both implicitly and explicitly respond to LGBTQ victimization with exclusionary disciplinary which leads to justice system involvement. This argument parallels past work on the role of schools as sites of social control, such as was the case for immigrants and lower-class youth in the past (Kupchik & Ellis 2007; Cohen 1985).

### ***Moderation of Harm by Social Characteristics***

Although it is clear that race and ethnicity are the most prevalent forms of biased victimization, there is some debate about which group experience the greatest impacts. Craig-Henderson & Sloan (2003) suggest that racist hate crimes against Black individuals are especially damaging because of the history of institutionalized racism and discrimination that contextualizes the incidents. Craig-Henderson & Sloan (2003) write: "For people of color, and in particular African Americans, racist hate crimes have a regrettably long history. These incidents, born of racism, have occurred within a cultural context that has consistently jeopardized the physical and psychological well-being of African Americans and others...When an anti-Black



racist hate crime occurs it brings all of the dormant feelings of anger, fear, and pain to the collective psychological forefront of the victim.” (Craig-Henderson & Sloan, 2003). Because of the history of slavery, lynching, segregation in school and housing, and legal discrimination, racist hate crimes committed against Black individuals in the U.S. might cause more harm than other forms of biased victimization.

However, Meyer (2010) suggests that for hate crime targeting sexual orientation, non-White individuals may experience fewer harms than White individuals. Interpreting data from in-depth interviews with hate crime victims in NYC, Meyer (2010) finds that middle class, White victims report more harms following LGBTQ victimization than lower income non-White victims even though the lower income nonwhite victims described incidents that were more severe (i.e., violent). Inspection of his data revealed that non-White victims were more likely than White victims to know other people who had been victimized by violence and to compare their own experiences to others, which likely caused them to de-emphasize their own harms.

Some work suggests that sexual and gender minority youth are generally more affected by both biased (Garnett et al., 2014) and nonbiased (Fedewa et al., 2011) bullying than non-sexual minority youth. Furthermore, work on hate crime has found that anti-sexual orientation bias crimes are more likely than other types of hate crimes to involve serious injury (Lantz & Kim, 2019; Cheng & Ickles & Kenworthy, 2013). These findings are probably related to norms regarding traditional gender roles, which may both incite youth to prove their masculinity over nonconforming victims as well as cause additional stress on victims who feel rejected from mainstream society (Lantz & Kim, 2019; Gruenewald & Allison, 2018). A related explanation for these severe impacts is that sexual and gender minority youth experience a special form of bias-based bullying that is grounded in a “religious social ecology” that invokes religious and moral

language in a form of conversion bullying (Newman & Fantus 2015). Studies also suggest that prejudiced bullying based on sexual orientation can be very harmful when it occurs online, as Ratcliff & Burrow-Sanchez (2022) found that homophobic bullying was related to the highest odds of depressive symptoms when it occurred online (i.e., cyber bullying) compared to when it occurred at school.

### ***Protective Factors***

It is important for research to study both the factors that increase the risk of victims experiencing severe harm as well as the factors that can protect youth from deleterious impacts. Family and social support at school appear to be promising avenues that foster resilience in youth who experience discriminatory peer aggression. For instance, Shah et al. (2021) examined bias-based bullying among immigrant and nonimmigrant youth in a sample of 481 middle school students in the northeast United States. They found that family cohesion moderated the association between biased bullying and internalizing problems for immigrant youth but not for non-immigrant youth. On the other hand, school-belongingness moderated the association between biased bullying and impacts for non-immigrant youth. Similarly, Juang & Alvarez (2010) found that family cohesion moderated the association between bias-based bullying and anxiety (but not loneliness) for Chinese American adolescents.

Another protective factor could be identification with one's social group. For instance, Garnets, Herek, and Levy (1990) found that that a positive sense of self as a gay man, lesbian, or bisexual person helped victims better cope with the stresses caused by hate victimization. Similarly, identifying with one's race/ethnicity is protective against the negative impacts of discrimination (Sellers et al, 2003; see Yip 2018 for review).

## **Harms to Indirect Victims**

Hate crimes are often referred to as message crimes because choosing a victim based on their social characteristics is thought to send a message of intimidation to nonvictims who share those social characteristics (Iganski, 2001). Nonvictims who share the traits are threatened because bias-motivated offending implicitly suggests that it could have been them who was victimized (and that it might be them in the future). Weinstein (1992) refers to this phenomenon as an *in terrorem* effect in his discussion of how a biased victimization of a Jewish family likely incites fear in other Jewish families in the neighborhood. Moreover, as potential victims cannot change their social characteristics, there is little they can do to reduce their risk of future victimization (Levin & McDevitt, 1993).

However, few studies have empirically verified the existence of indirect harms. One early assessment to tackle this issue experimentally manipulated video scenes of victimization to imply that one victimization was racially biased (through use of biased language) and the other was not (Craig, 1999). The researchers instructed Black and White participants to view these scenes and report their reactions. Although they found no difference across viewer race in terms of emotional reactions, results indicated that Black participants were more likely to express a desire to retaliate after viewing the biased crime (Craig, 1999).

The authors concluded that biased crime may be especially likely to incite anger among nonvictims than other types of crimes, particularly for people who share the victim's social characteristics. This finding could imply that community unrest and inter-ethnic group relations may be especially likely to follow biased victimization. In addition, a recent qualitative study of indirect impacts on Muslim and LBGT people in England found that the most severe impacts to indirect victims occurred when the hate crime occurred in a location geographically close to

them, such as in their neighborhood (Walters et al., 2020). Similarly, Paterson et al., (2019) finds that knowing someone in the community who was a victim of hate crime often leads to anger (as well as anxiety) for other members of the social group.

Most studies that have examined indirect harms use qualitative interviewing and focus group methodology to demonstrate impacts. In one such study, Noelle (2002) conducted interviews with people who identified as LGB after the Matthew Shepard murder in 1998, which was a victimization based on anti-sexual orientation bias, to determine the extent of indirect harms they may have experienced following the publicization of this case. She found that nonvictims are affected similarly to the way victims are, in that their assumptions about the benevolence and meaningfulness of the world are shattered (Janoff-Bulman, 1989, 1992). As a coping mechanism to deal with these shattered assumptions, some participants in Noelle (2002)'s study engaged in defensive attribution, whereby they pointed to the behavioral or characterological dissimilarities between themselves and the victim. However, Noelle (2002) also notes that her participants reported some reactions that might be seen as positive, in that hearing about the murder caused them to take more pride in their identity and to build social support in the community.

Perry & Alvi (2012) used respondent-driven sampling techniques to survey and interview members of marginalized communities in Canada and assess their responses to hearing about biased victimization. They found that many participants who shared social characteristics of hypothetical victims reported shock, fear, anger, and feelings of inferiority in response. Participants also reported behavioral changes, such as changes in expression of identity for BGL people. Furthermore, many victims felt they could be next. In response to a scenario about a hate crime victimization a man (pseudo)named Jim, one participant wrote: “‘I feel for Jim– his safety and well-being. I also think that could’ve been anyone else leaving that meeting and that we all

are vulnerable’’(Perry & Alvi, 2012, P 65). However, similarly to Noelle (2002), some respondents reported an increased willingness to stand up to bigotry and take an active role in fighting prejudice in their communities. This finding is consistent with the Sussex hate crime project in England, which found that indirect victims sometimes respond by joining rights-based advocacy groups (Paterson et al., 2019). Kutateladze (2021) also reported that many of his LGBTQ direct victim participants also reported activism and increased tendency to be prideful of ‘out’ identity as one reaction to these incidents.

Two additional studies demonstrate the impacts on indirect victims. Bell & Perry (2015) examined indirect impacts for LGB individuals and Lim (2009) for Asian Americans. Both studies find that fractured intergroup relations, fear, isolation, and inferiority/lowered feelings of self-worth can occur after hearing about hate crimes. Similarly to Noelle (2002), Bell & Perry (2015) also found that nonvictims often blame other traits about the victims as causes to protect themselves. However, it is notable that most of these studies have very limited generalizability, use small non-representative samples, and do not provide control groups or assessments of how nonbiased victimization impacts people indirectly.

Although more difficult to quantify, some respondents in these studies referenced a broader indirect harm of hearing about hate crime: their faith in multiculturalism, democratic ideals, and trust in their communities and institutions to support them (Perry & Alvi, 2012; Bell & perry, 2015). These findings align with Iganski (2001)’s outermost layer of harm: the harms to the faith people may have in the ideals of democratic acceptance and equality that may be inflicted when these crimes occur without punishment by our institutions and by our society.

## **Variation in Impacts: Multiple Negative Experiences**

### ***Poly-Victimization***

Prior studies examining the impact of bias-motivated victimization might have overestimated impacts by not sufficiently accounting for the other types of victimization that youth could have also experienced. Most early work on youth victimization studied discrete victimization types in isolation (e.g., child maltreatment, bullying victimization, etc.). However, as evidence accumulated suggesting that different forms of victimization cluster among a subset of children, researchers recognized that victims who experience multiple different types of victimization are both a recognizable minority and likely to have greater difficulty coping with the stress of victimization (Rossman & Rosenberg, 1998; Saunders, 2003).

This body of work generally finds that poly-victimization is more harmful than experiencing one type of victimization. For example, Finkelhor, Omrod and Turner (2007a) found that poly-victimization among children ages 2-17 was highly related to trauma symptomology, more so than both any one type of victimization alone and repeated incidents of the same type of victimization (i.e., repeat victimization). Subsequent studies confirmed the link between multiple victimization and high levels of trauma, distress, and psychosocial adjustment post-victimization (Finkelhor, Omrod & Turner, 2007b; Turner, Finkelhor & Omrod 2010; Felix et al., 2009).

Most of the work on poly-victimization comes from the child maltreatment literature and focuses on cross-domain victimization, or victimization in multiple settings (e.g., at school and at home). Yet there is also evidence that some youth experience multiple forms of victimization within the school setting. For example, one study found that some students attending middle and high school in Vermont experienced bullying, cyberbullying, and peer harassment (defined as

negative actions inflicted due to skin color, religion, country/where they are from, sex, sexual identity, or disability) that year while at school (Garnett & Brion-Meisels, 2017). Specifically, 6.7% of the sample experienced all three victimization types, and 75% of youth who experienced peer harassment also experienced bullying that school year.

Another study categorized victimization types into physical, sexual, and verbal (teasing) and found evidence of clustering of victim types among students, such that 10% of the students in their sample reported moderate to high levels of victimization across all victimization types (Felix, Furlong & Austin, 2009). Felix et al. (2009) also found that poly-victimization was common among victims of bias-motivated victimization. However, this study did not consider bias-motivated victimization as a distinct type of victimization in categorizing poly-victims. In both studies, poly-victimization was related to lower perceived safety at school than single-type victimization (Garnett & Brion-Meisels, 2017; Felix, Furlong & Austin, 2009).

Theoretically, poly-victims are expected to experience greater impacts than single-type victims because victims who suffered more than one type of victimization would be more likely to engage in self-attribution because the negative experience cannot be attributed to a particular situation. That is, because the student victim covaries across incidents but the victimization type does not, poly-victims may be especially likely to attribute the cause of victimization to themselves. A few researchers have considered that experiencing different types of victimization may lead to more self-blame than single-type victimization (Finkelhor, 2007a; Outlaw et al., 2002; Turner et al., 2017). For example, Turner et al., 2017a examined the association between distress and poly-victimization among school-aged youth across multiple waves of data and found that stable and high-rate poly-victims have lower levels of perceived control (“mastery”)

than the other types of victims (Turner et al., 2017). Mastery partly mediated the association between high-rate poly-victimization and distress (Turner et al., 2017).

Thus, studies that fail to examine the group of youth who experience multiple different forms of victimization at school may be missing an important reason why some students experience very severe impacts. If poly-victimization and bias-motivated victimization each inflict substantial harm, then poly-victims who have also experienced bias-motivated victimization (or hate speech) could be a subset of individuals with an especially high risk of harm who might require prioritized intervention. Moreover, general strain theory (Agnew, 2019) predicts that high levels of distress, such as that which can follow severe victimization, can lead to maladaptive coping and later delinquency (see also Cullen et al., 2008). It is therefore important for studies to assess the full constellation of negative experiences that may affect youth at school in order to determine the independent impact of bias-motivated victimization.

### ***Multiple Biases***

Experiencing multiple forms of bias-motivated victimization occurs when the victim perceives that more than one of their (actual or perceived) identities, such as both their sexual orientation and their ethnicity, are targeted by the harassment(s). Theoretically, minority stress theory (Meyer, 2010) suggests that stressors which are unique in the population, such as those resulting from prejudice and discrimination, pose a myriad of challenges for disadvantaged groups whose members are already burdened and who have few resources to cope with additional challenges. Thus, it is reasonable to expect that experiencing two different minority stressors, such as both homophobia and racism, would be related to higher levels of distress than experiencing only one form of discrimination.



Consistent with this expectation, research has found that experiencing multiple forms of (perceived) discrimination relates to worse health outcomes than one form of discrimination (Grollman 2012, 2014; Greene 1994; Stuber et al., 2003). Drawing on intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1990) and hypothesizing a “double disadvantage” effect for individuals holding multiple disadvantaged statuses (Dowd & Bengston, 1978), this work finds that people who are multiply disadvantaged (in terms of race, gender, and socioeconomic status) experience more (and more varied forms of) perceived discrimination. Further, people who experience multiple forms of perceived discrimination have worse mental and physical health than their singly disadvantaged or privileged counterparts (Grollman 2012, 2014).

Also referred to as the “double jeopardy” hypothesis, this perspective expects that multiple disadvantages combine to simultaneously increase victims’ burden and lessen their resources to cope with stress (Ferraro & Farmer, 1996; Meyer, 2010). Furthermore, qualitative work suggest that multiple minority victimizations can impact individuals in the community who share both characteristics. For instance, Noelle (2002) describes her results: “Simon grew up hearing stories of the German Holocaust in his family, and he described how his Jewish identity, as well as his sexual and gender orientations (as an effeminate gay man), shaped his experience; he explained, ‘It was like a double pull, in the sense that [Shepard] was an effeminate young man, plus it was like Nazi style, and they did this to Jews all the time.’” (Noelle, 2002). Thus, the additional harms of multiple forms of bias-motivated victimization may extend to indirect victims as well.

On the other hand, some scholars have considered that people who experience multiple types of discrimination are better equipped to deal with such experiences than people whose disadvantage stems from one identity because they have developed strategies for resilience

against such harms (Moradi et al., 2010). For example, in considering the experiences of Black and White people of lesbian, gay, or bisexual identity, Meyer (2010) writes: “the resilience hypothesis states that in part because of their experiences with racism prior to coming out, Black LGB individuals are inoculated against the effects of stress related to homophobia and may actually fare better than LGB Whites” (Meyer, 2010: 447). Thus, it is also possible that in some cases, experiencing additional types of prejudice does not result in substantially more harm than experience one type. Overall, the evidence in the health literature generally suggests that both the stress and resilience expectation are empirically supported, although it appears that community-level resources may be critical for fostering resilience (Meyer, 2010; McConnell et al., 2018).

In the area of youth victimization, a small but growing body of research supports the stress/double disadvantage hypothesis. Studies have found that multiple types of biased victimization is experienced by a subset youth and leads to greater harms than single types of biased victimization (Mulvey et al., 2018; Mitchell et al., 2020). For instance, Mulvey et al. (2018) analyzed bias-based bullying in 2015 NCVS school crime supplement data and found that youth who experience multiple types of bias-based bullying report lower levels of afterschool activity participation and higher levels of school avoidance and fear than students who only report one type of bias-based bullying. However, this study analyzed only differences among bullying victims (i.e., youth who were only victimized by hate speech were not included in the analysis) and did not account for youths’ experiences with criminal victimization.

Mitchell et al. (2020) examined a sample of youth and young adults in three U.S. cities and found that multiple forms of bias victimization is common and related to greater trauma symptomology and lower perceived social support than experiencing one form. However, this study included all experiences of bias-victimization, regardless of whether they occurred at

school. Thus, it could include incidents perpetrated by adults or family members. Mitchell et al. (2020) also examined a measure of life-time exposure, which is a more liberal measure than is typical of victimization research. Furthermore, both studies examined relatively small samples of youth (N=854, Mitchell et al. 2020; N=678 Mulvey et al. 2018). Although these studies provide valuable contributions to the literature, more work is needed to assess the extent and impact of youths' experiences with multiple forms of bias-motivated victimization at school.

## Chapter 4: DATA

### **National Crime Victimization Survey: School Crime Supplement**

The first source of data for this dissertation come from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), a nationally representative annual survey administered by the United States Census Bureau for the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). Each year the survey includes approximately 160,000 persons in about 95,000 households. All persons living in the sampled household above the age of 12 who have no alternative permanent residence answer questions about themselves and their experiences with criminal victimization. The surveys are administered by trained interviewers, initially in-person, with follow-up interviews either in every six months for a total of seven interviews over three and a half years. Neighborhoods are chosen through a stratified random sampling design and households are cycled into the survey through a rotating panel. Because the NCVS is self-reported, it more accurately captures the prevalence of victimization than official crime statistics because official data include only victimizations that are reported to the police. As juvenile victimization and offending are less likely to be reported to the police than similar incidents involving adults (Hart & Rennison, 2003), self-report data are especially useful for the study of victimization among youth.

I use data from both the incident-level NCVS survey (hereafter the general NCVS) and from a supplemental survey, the School Crime Supplement (SCS). The School Crime Supplement is administered to any household member between the ages of 12 and 18 after their completion of the general NCVS if they are enrolled in school. The SCS can be administered at any of the interview waves, allowing for the possibility that adolescents in every sampled household can take the SCS. Any adolescent household member who has attended a primary or secondary school leading to a high school diploma in the past six months (including public,

private, vocational, trade, and church schools) is given the SCS. In the case of suspension, expulsion, extended vacation, or illness, as long as the student has attended a school at some point in the past six months for any period of time, they take the SCS. Students who were home-schooled do not take the SCS because the majority of the questions do not pertain to them.

The purpose of adding the School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the general NCVS is to collect data about schools and student experiences at school that could relate to victimization. Whereas the general NCVS identifies whether the youth has been criminally victimized (including at school) and gathers data on the details of the victimization(s), the SCS collects data about that student's school, such as the physical environment, social climate, and the prevalence of crime-related behaviors or experiences at the school (including non-criminal victimization).

Specifically, the SCS asks students about the presence of guns, gangs, drugs, weapons, and security measures at their school. It asks students about their school's rules, the enforcement of the rules, and student-teacher relations. The SCS also collects information about the respondent's own participation in extracurricular activities, their attitudes about school, and their expectations for education in the future. Aside from the victimizations already noted in the general NCVS, the SCS asks students about the nature and frequency of their experiences with bullying victimization and hate speech. Finally, the SCS asks students about their feelings of fear and about any precautions they take related to feeling unsafe at school.

The School Crime Supplement was first administered in 1989, again in 1995, and since 1999 in every other year. The studies contained in this dissertation analyze the SCS years that consistently ask students all the indicators of interest. Note that none of the studies use years prior to 1999 because the survey was significantly redesigned in 1999.

The data from each School Crime Supplement from 1999 to 2019 have been concatenated into a single dataset for the current analyses so that I am able to analyze several years of data at once. The large sample size of the concatenated data is useful because victimization by hate speech and bias-motivated bullying are typically reported rarely in general surveys. The larger sample allows for enough cases to provide greater statistical confidence in the findings. In addition to the concatenation over time, the SCS data are matched with the general NCVS data, containing the incidents of crime victimization reported by the students who took the SCS, enabling the examination of both victimization incidents and school factors for the same individuals.

### **Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (U.S.)**

The second source of data is the Health Behavior in School Aged Children (HBSC) for the 2009 to 2010 school year. The 2009-2010 survey was chosen because it contains indicators of bias-motivated bullying victimization. The HBSC is a cross-national study sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO) that began in 1983. Over 40 nations (mostly in Europe and North America) distribute these surveys every four years. Each national survey is administered independently, and some questions differ across nations to ensure they are relevant to the students in that country. The current study only uses data from the United States survey.

Each HBSC study sample is nationally representative and collected through a three-stage stratified design. Census divisions and grades are strata and school districts are the primary sampling units. The United States HBSC was collected by the CDM Group, Inc., through on-site (i.e., in school) questionnaires (roughly 60% online and 40% using paper surveys). The survey is administered to youth in public and private secondary schools (grades 5-10). The surveys for each of the grades differ from each other so that younger children are asked only age-appropriate

questions (e.g., grade 5 and 6 students are not asked about their drug use). In the case of student absence, a student can take the survey in the days following the original distribution of the questionnaire.

The data contain school IDs so that the clustering of students at the school level can be appropriately accounted for. In addition, a short school administrator questionnaire was distributed to collect school-level information about programming and bullying/violence prevention practices. The 2009-2010 U.S. version of the survey contains responses from students from 314 schools, with only 283 of those schools responding to an administrator survey. Broadly, the HBSC was designed with the goal of examining health-related behaviors and attitudes among youth in relation to their background characteristics. Another goal is to assess how health-related behaviors and attitudes develop throughout adolescent development. Specifically, the study contains questions about eating and exercise habits, drug and alcohol use, lifestyle choices (e.g., time spent with friends, video game and television use), parent presence and involvement, relationships with peers and teachers, and feelings about own's own body and appearance. In addition, there are measures of bullying victimization and bullying perpetration, including specific indicators of different bullying types (e.g., verbal, cyber, bias-motivated). The HBSC contains several indicators of mental and physical health, both in reference to the past 6 months and in the past week. Students are asked to self-report on the frequency of psychological problems, well-being, overall life satisfaction, long term illnesses and health problems, use of medication, and somatic symptoms such as headaches and stomachaches.

## **Strengths and Limitations of The Data**

I analyze two datasets in this dissertation because each contain unique strengths and weaknesses. Using both sources of data allows me to overcome some of these weaknesses and provides a more encompassing examination of hate speech than would be possible with only one data source. Moreover, if a finding emerges from both independent data sets, this would increase confidence that the finding is not an artifact of measurement for the particular source of data.

A strength of the NCVS SCS survey is that it contains information on criminal victimization, which is not typically assessed in studies of school-based bullying victimization, especially those focused on bias-motivation. As the mental health impacts of discriminatory bullying and hate speech may be affected by other negative experiences—especially crime victimization—it is important for studies to assess impacts for youth who have experienced both. Another strength of the NCVS SCS is that when asking the adolescent about their experiences with hate speech and bullying, the interviewer asks about which specific bias types (i.e., race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability) they perceived were being targeted. Importantly, the youth can indicate that multiple social characteristics have been targeted by biased actions. As the effects of multiply biased attacks have received only a small amount of research attention, this element is a notable strength. In addition, the NCVS SCS survey years from 1999 to 2019 (biennial) have been concatenated into a single dataset for the current analyses. This is important because one year of data would likely be insufficient to examine mental health impacts of youth who experienced both criminal victimization and bias-motivated bullying, as each are relatively rare.

However, the NCVS SCS does not contain information about bullying perpetration, nor does it contain many indicators of delinquency/offending. It also does not contain information



about the youths' lifestyle or routine activities. Finally, the NCVS SCS does not have clustering at the school level, so school information is all perceived by that student.

The HBSC overcomes some of the weaknesses of the NCVS SCS because it does contain measures of lifestyle/routine activities as well as both delinquency and peer delinquency. Very few studies of bias-motivated victimization assess these variables. In addition, the HBSC measures bias-motivated bullying perpetration, which is also vastly understudied. Unlike the SCS, the HBSC data are at the school level, so, information about the respondents' school context as reported by other students can be observed. Despite these strengths, a limitation of the HBSC is that the only bias types included in the survey are race/color, religion, and sexual comments, so the measure of bias-motivated victimization is relatively limited. Even so, the HBSC contains information that complement the NCVS SCS data so that a more encompassing examination of bias-motivated victimization can be accomplished.

### **Missing data and Survey Weights**

For the SCS, most variables contain small amounts of missingness (less than 5%). In the HBSC survey, about 7% of the sample is missing on many of the bullying variables and just over 5% is missing on many predictor variables of interest for study 4 (e.g., fighting and weapon carrying). To reduce potential bias in estimates that would result from listwise deletion and to retain a maximal sample size, I conduct multiple imputation with chained equations (MICE) using the MI command in STATA prior to analyses. MICE is a set of linear and general linear models that substitute missing data values for plausible values using the observed data and an iterative stochastic approach. For every missing value, I estimate 20 plausible values (Johnson & Young, 2011). I include all variables from the analysis in the procedure.

I then use the MI estimate commands in STATA to estimate my regression procedures on each of the multiply imputed datasets and average the results. The MI estimate commands also allow me to execute post-estimation commands on these averaged results so that I can obtain predicted probabilities from the imputed datasets (e.g., “MI margins”). Importantly, although I use multiple imputation for both datasets, I do not impute for part B of Study 1 because part B uses CEM. Instead, for the analyses using CEM, I allow the algorithm to match on missingness.

In addition to the missing data that indicates no answer at all from the respondent, some SCS variables have large amounts of “don’t know” responses. For instance, for the indicator asking the youth if there are street gangs at their school, 14.85% of the sample reported “don’t know.” For the availability of hard drugs at school (which is measured differently across the survey years), some have large amounts of “don’t know” responses as well (e.g., 13.79%). Less problematic are questions like the presence of guards and metal detectors at school, which also have a decent number of students reporting “don’t know” (i.e., 2.51% and 6.41%).

The measures for the presence of gangs and availability of drugs at school probably contain large amounts of “don’t know” responses because students were either unsure of whether gangs and drugs are at their school or because they did not want to report them in a survey. To determine the appropriate coding strategy for these responses, I code and analyze the “don’t know” responses as a separate, intermediary category in bivariate analyses (in addition to coding them as “not present”). If the “don’t know” responses are related to the outcomes similarly to the “no” responses, I combine them for ease of interpretation in the primary analyses. In this case, the indicators of drugs and gangs would be measured as dummy variables, with values equal to 1 if the student reports they are present and 0 if the student reports they are not present or does not

know whether gangs and drugs are at their school. Otherwise, I will analyze the “don’t know” responses as their own category in primary analyses.

I also use a person weight for analyses of SCS data as well as student and school weights for analyses of the HBSC to ensure that estimates are nationally representative. These weights ensure that oversampled, hard-to-reach populations are appropriately representing their actual share of the total population. I account for the complex survey designs of both surveys using the `surveyset` (“SVY”) commands in STATA. For the NCVS, public use files require the “`secuode: half sample code`” (V2118) and the “`pseudostratum code`” (V2117) to be used in the SVY command, as described in the User Manual (Schook-Sa, Couzens & Berzofsky, 2015). For the HBSC survey, I use the `DIST_ID` variable (i.e., Unique District ID/PSU) and the `DIVISION` variable (labeled Census Division/ Randomized/ Stratum ID) for the SVY command.

## Chapter 5. STUDY 1: IMPACTS OF BIASED AND NONBIASED VICTIMIZATION

### **PART A: The School Crime Supplement (NCVS SCS)**

The foundation of support for school policies that target the reduction, prevention, and punishment of prejudicial victimization rests on evidence demonstrating that victimization motivated by bias causes harms to victims that are distinct from the harms of nonbiased victimization. Unlike nonbiased victimization, bias-motivated incidents affect indirect victims, or people who belong to the victim's social group (Weinstein, 1992; Iganski, 2001; Noelle, 2002). Additionally, some evidence suggests that direct victims are more likely to endure fear, trauma, and injury when a victimization is bias-motivated (versus nonbiased; McDevitt et al., 2001; Iganski and Lagou, 2015; Masucci and Langton, 2017; Malcolm & Lantz, 2021).

Scholars have asserted that biased victimization inflicts greater harms on victims than nonbiased victimization because of the inherent denigration and affront to personhood implicated in discriminatory harassment (Perry, 2001). Others suggest that the harm is a consequence of greater offender animus (Lantz & Kim, 2019). The body of work on the physiological impacts of discrimination (e.g., increased cortisol output; Korous et al., 2017) also implies that there are adverse effects on mental health that are specific to prejudicial victimization. Although there is substantial evidence to support this notion of greater harm among (mostly adult) hate *crime* victims (Iganski & Langou 2015, McDevitt et al., 2001; Herek et al., 1997), relatively few studies have compared the impacts of biased and nonbiased *noncriminal* victimization among youth in the school setting. Yet, peer aggression and bullying rooted in bias is not uncommon in schools, and their occurrence is recognized as a serious obstacle undermining schools' ability to cultivate an inclusive learning space (Ramirez et al., 2022).

The existing studies on biased victimization among youth are typically limited to one or two geographic area(s) within the United States (e.g., Russell et al., 2012; Baams, Talmage & Russell, 2017). Other studies examine the effects of biased victimization without comparison to nonbiased victimization (e.g., Mitchell et al., 2020). One exception is a study by Turner et al. (2015), which found that although bias was an aggravating element of peer victimization, the effect was reduced after accounting for other incident characteristics, such as victim injury. As the conflicting results of prior work convey, there is a need for more nation-wide analyses comparing victim impacts for biased and nonbiased victimization among adolescents to determine whether the findings from the hate crime literature apply to the school setting.

Another limitation of prior work is that most school-based research focuses on only one type of bias, most commonly sexual orientation, or racial bias (e.g., Larochette et al., 2010). Few studies examine the impacts of biased victimization for multiple bias types. Consequently, there is little evidence demonstrating that biased victimization is impactful for youth regardless of which characteristic is targeted. As some types of biased victimization may not be universally recognized as discriminatory (e.g., victimization motivated by gender bias, Mellgren et al., 2021), it is important to demonstrate that biased victimization is harmful in all its forms.

In addition, few studies examine the impacts of biased victimization for *multiple* bias types, even though experiencing biased victimization involving more than one type of bias may lead to greater impacts than experiencing biased victimization involving one type of bias (Mitchell et al., 2020). Drawing on intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1990), this work reveals that people who hold multiple marginalized identities experience more – and more varied forms of – discrimination than people who hold one marginalized identity. Further, varied experiences with discrimination can amplify negative impacts (Denise, 2014). Also referred to as the “double

jeopardy” hypothesis, researchers suggest that multiple types of prejudicial experiences interact with each other to increase victims’ psychological burden (Ferraro & Farmer, 1996). In the area of youth victimization, a few studies support the double jeopardy hypothesis (Mulvey et al., 2018; Mitchell et al., 2020). However, more work is needed.

The current study uses nationally representative data (NCVS SCS) from 2017 and 2019 ( $N=2,241$ ) to examine whether bias-motivated (or, biased) bullying victimization is related more strongly to negative effects on physical health, self-esteem, social relationships, and schoolwork than nonbiased bullying victimization after accounting for characteristics about the bullying, the student, and the school. I then examine whether the odds of experiencing each of the perceived impacts increases as the number of bias types targeted by the victimization increases.

My research questions are as follows:

*RQ1: Do youth who experience any bias-motivated bullying victimization have higher odds of experiencing health, social, self-esteem, and educational impacts from the bullying than youth who were bullied but did not perceive the bullying to be bias-motivated?*

*RQ2: Is biased bullying victimization involving a greater number of bias types associated with greater odds of experiencing negative impacts than biased bullying victimization involving one bias type?*

### **Study Contributions**

This study advances the literature on both victimization and discrimination at school by using recent, nationally representative data to compare victim impacts for bullying that was and was not perceived by the victim to be motivated by bias against their social identity. In contrast to prior work, which has examined outcomes like truancy/attendance (Jones et al., 2018; Baams, Talmage & Russell, 2017), risky behaviors (Russel et al., 2012) and trauma (Mitchell et al., 20120), I compared associations across four impact types, some of which have seldom been assessed in the existing literature (e.g., self-esteem). I also extended prior work by examining

impacts for multiple bias types, which is not often a component of analyses that compare impacts to nonbiased victimization, especially among youth samples.

### **The Current Study**

First, I determined whether youth who have experienced any bullying victimization motivated by bias have higher odds of experiencing negative effects on their physical health, self-esteem, schoolwork, and social relationships than youth who have experienced bullying victimization that was not related to bias against their social identity. I hypothesized that *youth who perceive that they have been bullied because of their social characteristics (i.e., the perpetrator was motivated by bias) will be more likely to experience all four types of impacts from the bullying than youth who do not perceive that they were bullied because of their social characteristics (H1)*. Second, I assessed whether the number of bias types involved in the victimization relates to increasing odds of experiencing each of the perceived negative impacts. I hypothesized that *biased victimization involving a greater number of bias types will relate to all four types of perceived negative impacts more strongly than biased victimization involving a fewer number of bias types (H2)*.

### **Sample Selection**

This analysis was limited to SCS survey years 2017 and 2019 because indicators of the health, social, and educational consequences of bullying victimization were not included in SCS surveys prior to 2015. However, the bullying measures differ in 2015 compared to 2017 and 2019, so 2015 is excluded to ensure consistency in measurement. In addition, the 2019 survey consists of two questionnaire versions. One version matches the 2017 survey, whereas the other introduces new wording of questions (and new questions) related to bullying and drug availability. I used only the version that matches the 2017 survey.

## *Measures*

### *Independent Variables*

The focal independent variable for this study was biased school victimization, measured as whether, in the past year, the student ever perceived their school victimization to be bias-motivated (i.e., biased) or never perceived their victimization to be bias-motivated. Students who were not victimized at school in the past year were excluded from the analytic sample. To measure school victimization, the SCS interviewer asks the student: “Now I have some questions about what students do at school that make you feel bad or are hurtful to you. We often refer to this as being bullied. During this school year, has any other student bullied you? That is, has another student...” with the options: “made fun of you, called you names, or insulted you, in a hurtful way?”, “spread rumors about you or tried to make others dislike you?”, “threatened you with harm?”, “pushed you, shoved you, tripped you, or spit on you?”, “tried to make you do things you did not want to do, for example, give them money or other things?”, “excluded you from activities on purpose?”, “destroyed your property on purpose?”. I use the term “school victimization” instead of bullying because the language in the measure does not align with the scientific literature on bullying (i.e., repeated and involving power imbalance; Olweus, 1994).

Students who reported that they have been victimized in the past year were then asked if they perceived that bias was involved using the following question: “When you were bullied in school this year, did you ever think it was related to your...” followed by “race”, “religion”, “ethnic background or national origin, for example, people of Hispanic origin”, “any disability that you may have- such as physical, mental, or developmental disabilities”, “gender”, “sexual orientation- by this we mean gay, lesbian, bisexual, or straight” and “physical appearance.” Response options were “yes”, “no” and “don’t know” for each of these characteristics. Students



could answer “yes” to more than one bias type. If the student answered “yes” to any bias type (or more than one bias type), they experienced biased victimization (1=yes). The final focal predictor variable was biased school victimization, measured as experienced biased victimization in the past year (1=yes) and did not experience biased victimization in the past year (i.e., experienced nonbiased victimization only; 0= no).

To assess whether biased victimization involving a greater number of bias types related to higher odds of the perceived impacts than victimization involving a fewer number of bias types, I created a scale for the number of bias types targeted by the victimization (0 to 4, with zero being no bias types [i.e., nonbiased victimization] and 4 being four or more bias types, due to the left skew of the data). For example, if a student experienced victimization motivated by bias against their race and their gender, they would be coded as experiencing two bias types.

#### *Dependent Variables*

The dependent variables were the impacts of victimization as perceived by the victims. These indicators were asked only of students who reported being victimized in the past year. The SCS asks the students: “This school year, how much has bullying had a negative effect on” each of the following: “your schoolwork”, “your physical health for example, caused injuries, gave you headaches or stomachaches”, “your relationships with friends or family” and “how you feel about yourself.” The student can respond “not at all,” “not very much”, “somewhat”, or “a lot.” These variables were coded dichotomously as 0= “not at all” and 1= “not very much,” “somewhat,” or “a lot” because the majority of students responded “not at all”.

#### *Control Variables*

The total number of victimization types experienced by each student in the past year (e.g., spread rumors about you, destroyed your property) was included as a covariate because it is likely that

experiencing a greater number of victimization types is related to greater impacts regardless of whether those types contained bias. I also controlled for proxy measures of school attachment. These measures were grades (“during this school year, across all grades have you gotten mostly...A’s, B’s, C’s, D’s, or F’s”), educational expectations (“thinking about the future, do you think you will...attend school after high school, such as college or technical school,” 1=yes) and participation in [any] extracurricular activities (“during this school year, have you participated in any of the following activities sponsored by your school?” with options athletic teams, spirit groups, performing arts, academic clubs, student government, volunteer or community service clubs, or other school clubs; 1=yes to any).

Other control measures were self-reported sex (1=female), race/ethnicity (Non-Hispanic White, Non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, and all other racial/ethnic groups), and age (0=12-14, 1=15-18). Characteristics of the school were type (private or public), perceived gang and gun presence (1=yes), perceptions of school discipline as fair (1=agree or strongly agree that rules are fair), presence of security guards, and presence of metal detectors, all reported by the student. The geographic region of the United States was categorized as Northeast, Midwest, South, and West. Urbanicity of the youths’ home neighborhood (which is often the same as the school) was categorized as urban, suburban, or rural, depending on the metropolitan statistical area (MSA) designation assigned by the NCVS.

### **Analytic Strategy**

I began with a description of the data. Next, I examined the bivariate associations between biased (versus nonbiased) victimization and the perceived impacts as well as between the number of bias types and the perceived impacts (i.e., unadjusted models). Multivariable logistic regression models were then used to estimate the associations between biased (versus nonbiased)

victimization and the outcomes net of all covariates (i.e., adjusted models). For ease of interpretation, the predicted probabilities of experiencing each perceived impact for biased and nonbiased victimization were calculated and plotted with 95% confidence intervals. Next, I estimated adjusted models with number of bias types as the focal independent variable. All analyses were adjusted for imputation (MICE) and the complex survey design using the MI and SVY commands in STATA 17.

## **Results**

### *Summary Statistics*

Weighted summary statistics of the SCS 2017-2019 data are presented in Table 5-1. About 23% of youth who took the SCS reported experiencing any victimization at school in the past year. Of the victimized youth, approximately 43% perceived that at least some of that victimization was motivated by bias. The average number of bias types experienced by the victimized youth was 0.68 (SD=.03). Appearance bias was the most common bias type (experienced by 29% of victims), and racial and ethnic bias had the highest correlation with each other (see Table A1 for co-occurrence of bias types).

The average number of victimization types experienced by the victimized youth was 2.17 (SD=1.32). Being threatened and having rumors spread about you were the most common types of victimization, reported by 63% and 66% of victims, respectively. Property destruction was the least common (7%). Table A3 shows the victimization types experienced by biased and nonbiased victims as well as across the bias types. Overall, students who experienced biased victimization reported a greater number of victimization types than students who experienced nonbiased victimization. Turning to the perceived impacts, negative effects on self-esteem was the most common (27%) and negative effects on physical health was the least common (13%).

Negative effects on self-esteem and schoolwork were most often reported by the same individuals ( $\text{corr}=.44$ ; see Table A2).

### ***Bivariate Results***

Table 5-2 presents the bivariate associations between biased (versus nonbiased) victimization and each of the perceived impacts (Panel A) as well as between the number of bias types and each of the perceived impacts (Panel B). Biased victimization was associated with greater odds of experiencing perceived impacts than nonbiased victimization for all four impact types (physical health, self-esteem, social relationships, schoolwork), and the effect size was largest for self-esteem. Relative to nonbiased victimization, experiencing biased victimization was associated with a 3.08 factor increase in the odds of perceiving negative effects on self-esteem ( $\text{OR}=3.08$ , 95%  $\text{CI}=[2.44, 3.90]$ ). Biased victimization was associated with increased odds of experiencing each of the other perceived impacts by a factor of more than 2 each ( $\text{OR}$  ranging from 2.11 for social relationships to 2.96 for schoolwork). A greater number of bias types involved in the victimization was also associated with higher odds of experiencing all four perceived impact types. For example, for every one unit increase in the number of bias types, odds of perceiving negative effects on schoolwork increased by 70% ( $\text{OR}=1.70$ , 95%  $\text{CI}=[1.48, 1.95]$ ).

### ***Main Results***

Table 5-3 reports the associations between biased (versus nonbiased) victimization and the perceived impacts after adjusting for the covariates. Predicted probabilities of each perceived impact were calculated from these estimates and plotted in Figure 5-1. Biased victimization was again statistically significantly associated with all four perceived impact types, and the odds ratio was largest for negative effects on self-esteem. For example, relative to nonbiased victimization,

biased victimization was associated with a 2.43 factor increase in the odds of experiencing negative effects on self-esteem (OR=2.43, 95% CI [1.86-3.16]).

In addition, each increase in the number of victimization types was associated with increased odds of experiencing all four perceived impacts (OR ranging from 1.56 for self-esteem to 1.81 for physical health), as was being female. Receiving higher (versus lower) grades was negatively associated with odds of experiencing all impacts except for self-esteem. The presence of security guards at school was negatively associated with experiencing perceived impacts on social relationships and schoolwork, which may indicate that security guards are protective against some types of harms for victims.

Table 5-4 presents the adjusted models for the associations between number of bias types involved in the victimization and the perceived impacts. Net of covariates, a greater number of bias types was associated with higher odds of experiencing all four of the perceived impacts. Specifically, each unit increase in the number of bias types was associated with increased odds of perceived negative effects on self-esteem (44%) schoolwork (39%), physical health (28%) and social relationships (18%). A greater number of victimization types and being female were each associated with increased odds of all impact types in these models as well, whereas higher grades was associated with decreased odds of experiencing the four perceived impacts.

### ***Supplementary Analyses***

I separately examined the associations between biased victimization and odds of experiencing the perceived impacts for physical forms of victimization (i.e., threats, push/shove, destroy property) and for non-physical forms of victimization (the remaining victimization types; see Table 5-5) to assess whether the findings were driven by physical victimization. I found that students had increased odds of experiencing perceived impacts for biased (versus nonbiased)

victimization in the models for both physical victimization and non-physical victimization, and the odds ratios for bias were similar across models.

I also examined the effects of biased victimization for students with low grades and for students with high grades. I expected that, particularly for negative effects on schoolwork, biased victimization might not be as impactful for students with low grades because these students are likely relatively unattached to school, irrespective of their victimization experiences. Results indicated that, for students with low grades and for students with high grades, biased (versus nonbiased) victimization was associated with greater odds of experiencing all four of the perceived impacts (see Table 5-6).

## **Discussion**

The goal of this study was to assess whether students who experienced school victimization motivated by bias were more likely to perceive negative effects on their physical health, self-esteem, social relationships, and schoolwork from the victimization than students who experienced school victimization not motivated by bias. I expected that findings from the adult hate crime literature would generalize to the school setting, such that biased incidents would give rise to greater impacts than nonbiased incidents. I also determined whether biased victimization involving a greater number of bias types related to the perceived impacts more strongly than biased victimization involving a fewer number of bias types.

Over a third of the youth who had been victimized at school in the past year (i.e., 43%) reported that some of their victimization was related to bias. As the data are nationally representative, these results indicate that social characteristics play a fairly large role in the experiences of youth who are victimized at school in the United States. Consistent with the hate crime literature (McDevitt et al., 2001) and existing work on prejudicial victimization among

youth (e.g., Mulvey et al., 2018), biased victimization was associated with greater odds of experiencing all four types of impacts than nonbiased victimization. The magnitude of this difference was particularly large for negative effects on self-esteem and relatively small for negative effects on social relationships. The weaker association between bias and impacts on social relationships could be because, relative to nonbiased victimization, biased victimization less frequently involves perpetrators who are in the same peer groups as their victims, so damage to social relationships should be less likely.

That biased victimization related to greater odds of perceived negative effects on physical health than nonbiased victimization aligns with work that finds discrimination can cause physiological problems that lead to health issues (Lewis et al., 2015). It is also consistent with hate crime studies which show that biased crimes are more likely than nonbiased crimes to involve physical injury (Lantz & Kim, 2019). As the current study's supplementary analyses (Table 5-5) indicated that victims of biased victimization experience physical victimization more frequently than do victims of nonbiased victimization, it is possible that biased victimization at school relates to health problems because it often involves physical violence. Future research should investigate further the extent to which physical victimization features in biased incidents at school. However, as the current study found that bias was harmful for both physical and non-physical forms of victimization, intervention efforts should not be limited to physical victimization.

Students who experienced biased victimization were also more likely than nonbiased victims to perceive negative effects on their schoolwork, implying that biased victimization might contribute to lower educational achievement for minoritized groups. This association between biased victimization and impacts on schoolwork was observed for students across the

academic spectrum. Academic achievement is important for numerous life outcomes (Lê-Scherban et al., 2014), and education can serve as a pro-social commitment that reduces youths' tendency towards delinquency and, by extension, justice system contact (Hirschi, 1969). The current study therefore suggests that it is crucial for equity in education— and in society more generally – that prevention efforts prioritize tactics that target incidents involving prejudice.

Overall, the results of this study indicated that biased victimization –which included bias against race, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and/or appearance – is related to greater odds of victims' experiencing perceived impacts on their physical health, self-esteem, social relationships, and schoolwork than nonbiased victimization. Certain bias types, such as gender bias, have been excluded from hate crime laws (Mellgren et al., 2021), and some forms of bias that were prevalent in the current study (e.g., appearance bias) may not be acknowledged as discriminatory by all school personnel. Thus, these findings imply that schools should raise awareness that biased victimization is harmful to young people in all its forms.

Consistent with research on discrimination and health (Denise, 2014), victimization involving a greater number of bias types was associated with higher odds of perceived impacts than victimization involving a fewer number of bias types. This finding aligns with the “double jeopardy” hypothesis (Ferraro & Farmer, 1996) and suggests that students who hold multiple minoritized identities have more varied experiences with biased victimization at school – experiences that translate into a high likelihood of perceived impacts. School prevention programs should aim to identify students whose risk of prejudicial victimization may stem from multiple sources, and programming should bear in mind that the cumulative harm of these stressors may aggravate youths' resilience development (Ferraro & Farmer, 1996).



In addition to the number of bias types, a greater number of victimization types was also associated with increased odds of experiencing all impacts. This finding reiterates the importance of studying adolescent poly-victimization (Finkelhor et al., 2007). Being female was also associated with greater odds of the perceived impacts, which might be because girls have a greater tendency to report psychological distress following school victimization (Popp et al., 2014). This finding for gender is consistent with the claims of hate crime scholars who suggest that biased offending is centered around accomplishing normative masculine identity (Bufkin, 1999; Allison & Klein, 2021).

The findings of this study imply that schools should prioritize programming that targets the reduction of biased victimization, and that failing to do so could result in the exacerbation of existing inequalities through damage to students' self-esteem, physical health, social relationships, and educational achievement. One potential intervention is to increase school organizations designed to promote inclusivity, such as Gay Straight Alliance clubs, which have been demonstrated as effective for reducing multiple types of bias-based bullying among female students who identify as LGBT (Gower et al., 2021). The spirit of this approach can be extended to other groups. Special attention should be afforded to females and victims who hold multiple stigmatized identities, whose well-being was the most likely to be harmed by biased victimization in the current study.

### ***Strengths and Limitations***

These results should be assessed while considering the study limitations. All possible types of victim impacts were not measured, so biased victimization might not be associated with greater odds of impacts than nonbiased victimization for some unmeasured outcomes (e.g., risky behavior). In addition, reporting of bias in this study was based on victim perception and not

verified by an independent source. Factors related to the school climate that could be important for understanding the impacts of biased victimization (e.g., support groups) were not accounted for due to their lack of measurement in the data. Another limitation is that the effect of biased (versus nonbiased) victimization was not examined across student identities. For example, the perceived impact of experiencing biased victimization for students who did and who did not identify as a sexual minority could not be examined because sexual identity of the respondent was not measured in the data.

Among the strengths of this study is its focus on outcomes that are specific to the consequences respondents report facing as a result of their victimization. Whereas other studies measure difficulties that students have at school and assume these difficulties resulted from victimization after accounting for potential confounders, the students in this study were explicitly asked about the consequences they felt as a result of their victimization. Moreover, the data analyzed in this study are nationally representative, so the findings are generalizable to the U.S.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study adds to the rising tide of evidence demonstrating that adolescent victimization motivated by bias is uniquely impactful. Findings revealed that, compared to nonbiased victimization, youth who experienced biased victimization were more likely to perceive negative impacts on their physical health, schoolwork, social relationships, and self-esteem. School interventions should bear in mind that victimization involving multiple bias types appears to be especially influential for youth. These findings underscore the potential for peer aggression involving prejudice to threaten schools' abilities to promote inclusive learning environments for young people.

## CHAPTER 5 PART A - TABLES

Table 5-1. Weighted Summary Statistics of Study Variables for Victimized Youth, NCVS SCS 2017-2019

	% or Mean (SD)	N
Total sample <i>N</i> =9,833		
Victimization Prevalence		
Any Victimization (previous school year)	23%	2,241
Analytic Sample <i>N</i> =2,241		
Biased Victimization	43%	967
Nonbiased Victimization	57%	1,274
Number of Bias Types	0.68 (0.03)	
Perceived Negative Impacts of Victimization (this school year)		
Physical Health	13%	297
Self-esteem	27%	608
Schoolwork	18%	416
Social Relationships	18%	417
Covariates		
Number of Victimization Types	2.17 (1.32)	
Extracurricular Involvement	74%	1,653
Aspire to Attend Higher Education	93%	2,075
Grades	3.16 (0.85)	
Fairness of School Rules	1.98 (0.55)	
Gang Presence	16%	351
Gun Presence	7%	155
Metal Detectors	9%	172
Guards	73%	1,645
Public school	94%	2,112
Northeast	17%	262
Midwest	23%	667
South	23%	792
West	24%	520
Urban	28%	571
Suburban	54%	1,315
Rural	18%	355
Female	56%	1,249
Non-Hispanic White	58%	1,357
Non-Hispanic Black	15%	255
Other race/ethnicity	9%	189

**Table 5-1. Weighted Summary Statistics of Study Variables for Victimized Youth, NCVS SCS 2017-2019 (Continued)** 440

Age	14.41(1.86)	
Survey year: 2017	60%	1,389
Survey year: 2019	40%	852

*Notes:* Victimization types were made fun of (29%); spread rumors (63%); threatened (66%); physical (hit, shove; 20%), made things not want to do (25%); exclude (26%); destroy property (7%). Bias types were race (10%); religion (4%); ethnicity (7%); gender (7%); sexual orientation (4%); disability (8%); and appearance (29%). “other” race/ethnicity includes students who reported belonging to multiple racial/ethnic groups.

Table 5-2. Odds Ratios and 95% CIs of Perceived Impacts for Biased and Nonbiased Victimization: Unadjusted Models ( $N=2, 241$ )

	M1: Health		M2: Self-Esteem		M3: Social Relationships		M4: Schoolwork	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
	Panel A: Any Biased Victimization							
Victimization (ref=nonbiased)								
Biased	2.76***	(2.01 - 3.80)	3.08***	(2.44 - 3.90)	2.11***	(1.60 - 2.79)	2.96***	(2.21 - 3.98)
	Panel B: Number of Bias Types							
Victimization (ref=0/nonbiased)								
Number of Bias Types	1.62***	(1.41 - 1.86)	1.65***	(1.48 - 1.84)	1.48***	(1.30 - 1.68)	1.70***	(1.48 - 1.95)

Notes: \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$

Table 5-3. Odds Ratios and 95% CIs of Perceived Impacts for Biased and Nonbiased Victimization: Adjusted Models (N=2,241)

	M1: Physical Health		M2: Self-Esteem		M3: Social Relationships		M4: Schoolwork	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Victimization (ref=nonbiased)								
Biased	1.70**	(1.19 - 2.43)	2.43***	(1.86 - 3.16)	1.40*	(1.03 - 1.92)	1.97***	(1.44 - 2.69)
Covariates								
Number of Victimization types	1.81***	(1.58 - 2.08)	1.56***	(1.39 - 1.74)	1.75***	(1.56 - 1.96)	1.68***	(1.52 - 1.86)
Aspire to attend higher ed.	0.61	(0.33 - 1.11)	0.93	(0.53 - 1.62)	0.98	(0.48 - 1.98)	0.69	(0.40 - 1.21)
Grades	0.71***	(0.59 - 0.86)	0.88	(0.75 - 1.02)	0.82*	(0.69 - 0.97)	0.62***	(0.52 - 0.73)
Extracurricular involvement	0.98	(0.67 - 1.43)	1.02	(0.74 - 1.40)	1.39	(0.97 - 2.00)	0.80	(0.58 - 1.08)
Detectors	1.20	(0.63 - 2.28)	0.89	(0.52 - 1.53)	0.61	(0.32 - 1.15)	0.74	(0.43 - 1.25)
Fairness of school rules	0.71	(0.45 - 1.15)	0.89	(0.65 - 1.21)	1.10	(0.77 - 1.58)	0.97	(0.64 - 1.45)
Guards	1.04	(0.62 - 1.74)	0.80	(0.56 - 1.15)	0.58**	(0.41 - 0.82)	0.60*	(0.39 - 0.94)
Gang Presence	0.97	(0.59 - 1.61)	1.34	(0.82 - 2.18)	1.58	(0.93 - 2.68)	1.74*	(1.01 - 2.99)
Gun Presence	1.39	(0.98 - 1.98)	1.14	(0.91 - 1.43)	1.31	(0.98 - 1.74)	1.02	(0.76 - 1.37)
Public School (ref=private)	0.62	(0.33 - 1.16)	0.87	(0.50 - 1.52)	1.66	(0.72 - 3.81)	1.16	(0.62 - 2.20)
Female	2.88***	(1.93 - 4.29)	2.27***	(1.70 - 3.02)	2.62***	(1.86 - 3.68)	1.54**	(1.16 - 2.06)
Midwest (ref=northeast)	1.31	(0.76 - 2.27)	0.62*	(0.40 - 0.94)	0.75	(0.43 - 1.32)	1.11	(0.71 - 1.76)
South	0.89	(0.50 - 1.59)	0.64*	(0.43 - 0.95)	0.92	(0.53 - 1.59)	0.99	(0.63 - 1.56)
West	1.06	(0.59 - 1.93)	0.65	(0.42 - 1.02)	0.78	(0.43 - 1.39)	0.97	(0.55 - 1.73)
Suburb (ref=urban)	1.12	(0.73 - 1.71)	0.89	(0.64 - 1.23)	0.67*	(0.46 - 0.96)	0.86	(0.59 - 1.26)
Rural	0.97	(0.56 - 1.69)	1.00	(0.67 - 1.49)	0.85	(0.52 - 1.41)	0.86	(0.55 - 1.33)

Table 5-3. Odds Ratios and 95% CIs of Perceived Impacts for Biased and Nonbiased Victimization: Adjusted Models (N=2,241) (Continued)

Black (ref=White)	0.72	(0.43 - 1.22)	0.67*	(0.45 - 0.99)	0.70	(0.43 - 1.15)	1.19	(0.69 - 2.04)
Other race/ethnicity	1.03	(0.54 - 1.98)	0.62	(0.37 - 1.03)	0.94	(0.51 - 1.71)	1.23	(0.73 - 2.06)
Hispanic	0.68	(0.43 - 1.09)	0.92	(0.63 - 1.35)	0.85	(0.54 - 1.35)	1.34	(0.88 - 2.03)
Age	0.97	(0.88 - 1.08)	1.00	(0.92 - 1.07)	1.01	(0.93 - 1.10)	0.97	(0.89 - 1.05)
Year	0.92	(0.78 - 1.08)	1.04	(0.91 - 1.19)	0.95	(0.82 - 1.10)	0.93	(0.80 - 1.10)

Notes: \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05

Table 5-4. Odds Ratios and 95% CIs of Perceived Impacts for Victimization by Number of Bias Types: Adjusted Models (N=2,241)

	M1: Health		M2: Self-Esteem		M3: Social Relationships		M4: Schoolwork	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Victimization Number of Bias Types	1.28**	(1.09 - 1.50)	1.44***	(1.28 - 1.61)	1.18*	(1.02 - 1.37)	1.39***	(1.20 - 1.62)
Covariates Number of Victimization Types	1.79***	(1.56 - 2.06)	1.55***	(1.39 - 1.72)	1.73***	(1.54 - 1.95)	1.66***	(1.50 - 1.83)
Aspire to attend higher ed.	0.61	(0.34 - 1.11)	0.94	(0.55 - 1.63)	0.99	(0.49 - 2.01)	0.71	(0.41 - 1.24)
Grades	0.70***	(0.58 - 0.85)	0.86*	(0.74 - 1.00)	0.81*	(0.68 - 0.96)	0.60***	(0.51 - 0.72)
Extracurricular involvement	0.98	(0.67 - 1.44)	1.01	(0.73 - 1.39)	1.39	(0.97 - 2.00)	0.80	(0.58 - 1.09)
Detectors Fairness of school rules	1.15	(0.60 - 2.21)	0.85	(0.48 - 1.49)	0.59	(0.31 - 1.13)	0.70	(0.40 - 1.22)
Guards	0.73	(0.45 - 1.17)	0.90	(0.66 - 1.22)	1.11	(0.78 - 1.59)	0.98	(0.66 - 1.47)
Gang Presence	1.04	(0.62 - 1.74)	0.81	(0.57 - 1.17)	0.58**	(0.41 - 0.83)	0.60*	(0.39 - 0.94)
Gun Presence	0.95	(0.57 - 1.59)	1.31	(0.80 - 2.13)	1.57	(0.92 - 2.66)	1.71	(0.99 - 2.96)
Public School (ref=private)	1.37	(0.96 - 1.94)	1.12	(0.89 - 1.40)	1.29	(0.97 - 1.73)	1.00	(0.75 - 1.32)
Female	0.58	(0.31 - 1.06)	0.81	(0.47 - 1.40)	1.59	(0.70 - 3.61)	1.06	(0.57 - 1.98)
Midwest (ref=northeast)	2.85***	(1.91 - 4.24)	2.25***	(1.69 - 2.99)	2.59***	(1.84 - 3.66)	1.53**	(1.15 - 2.04)
South	1.30	(0.75 - 2.26)	0.61*	(0.40 - 0.93)	0.75	(0.42 - 1.32)	1.10	(0.69 - 1.75)
West	0.89	(0.50 - 1.58)	0.63*	(0.42 - 0.94)	0.92	(0.53 - 1.59)	0.98	(0.62 - 1.56)
Suburb (ref=urban)	1.04	(0.57 - 1.89)	0.63*	(0.40 - 0.98)	0.76	(0.42 - 1.38)	0.94	(0.53 - 1.65)
Rural	1.10	(0.72 - 1.68)	0.87	(0.63 - 1.21)	0.67*	(0.46 - 0.96)	0.85	(0.59 - 1.24)
	0.97	(0.56 - 1.69)	0.98	(0.66 - 1.46)	0.85	(0.51 - 1.42)	0.86	(0.55 - 1.33)



Table 5-4. Odds Ratios and 95% CIs of Perceived Impacts for Victimization by Number of Bias Types: Adjusted Models (N=2,241) (Continued)

Black (ref=White)	0.72	(0.42 - 1.22)	0.67*	(0.46 - 0.99)	0.70	(0.43 - 1.14)	1.17	(0.70 - 1.97)
Other								
race/ethnicity	0.98	(0.51 - 1.91)	0.59*	(0.35 - 0.99)	0.91	(0.50 - 1.67)	1.16	(0.69 - 1.97)
Hispanic	0.65	(0.41 - 1.04)	0.87	(0.60 - 1.27)	0.83	(0.52 - 1.32)	1.27	(0.83 - 1.94)
Age	0.97	(0.88 - 1.07)	0.99	(0.92 - 1.07)	1.01	(0.92 - 1.10)	0.96	(0.88 - 1.04)
Year	0.92	(0.78 - 1.08)	1.04	(0.91 - 1.19)	0.96	(0.83 - 1.11)	0.94	(0.80 - 1.11)

Notes: \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05.

Table 5-5. Odds Ratios and 95% CIs of Perceived Impacts for Biased and Nonbiased Victimization by Victimization Type: Robustness Check

	M1: Health		M2: Self-Esteem		M3: Social Relationships		M4: Schoolwork	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Panel A: Physical Victimization <i>N</i> =743								
Victimization (ref=nonbiased)								
Biased	1.73*	(1.02 - 2.94)	2.69***	(1.72 - 4.19)	1.49	(0.90 - 2.48)	1.85*	(1.09 - 3.14)
Panel B: Non-Physical Victimization <i>N</i> = 2,118								
Victimization (ref=nonbiased)								
Biased	1.68**	(1.18 - 2.40)	2.40***	(1.83 - 3.14)	1.38*	(1.01 - 1.89)	1.91***	(1.40 - 2.61)

Notes: \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ . Models account for all covariates.

Physical victimization= threats, physical (push, shove, etc.), and destroy property.

Non-Physical victimization = made fun of, spread rumors, made you do things not want to do, exclude.

Not mutually exclusive (i.e., some youth experienced both physical and non-physical victimization).

Table 5-6. Odds Ratios and 95% CIs of Perceived Impacts for Biased and Nonbiased Victimization by Grades: Robustness Check

	M1: Physical Health		M2: Self-Esteem		M3: Social Relationships		M4: Schoolwork	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
	Panel B: Grades are Mostly As or Bs (N=1,667)							
Victimization (ref=nonbiased)								
Biased	2.58*	(1.08 - 6.14)	2.71**	(1.40 - 5.25)	2.01	(0.97- 4.19)	2.45**	(1.28 - 4.68)
	Panel A: Grades are Mostly Cs, Ds, or Fs (N=574)							
Victimization (ref=nonbiased)								
Biased	1.60*	(1.04 - 2.46)	2.40***	(1.79 - 3.22)	1.23	(0.85 - 1.78)	1.78**	(1.22 - 2.61)

Notes: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05. Models account for all covariates.

## CHAPTER 5 PART A – FIGURES

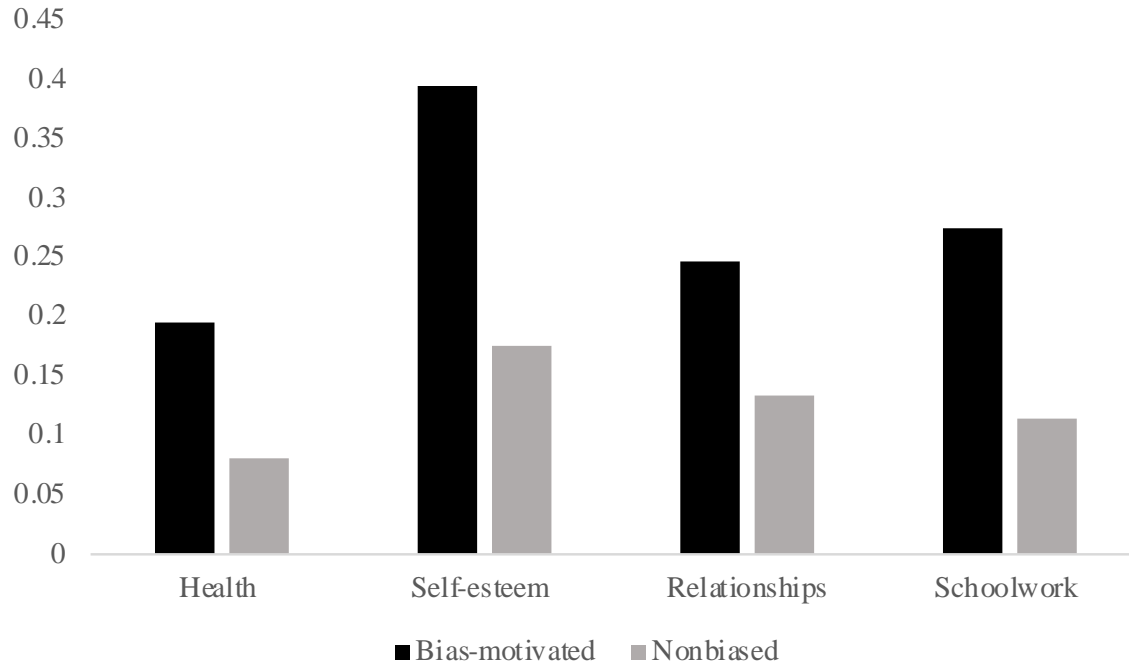


Figure 5-1. Predicted Probabilities of Negative Effect on Health, Self-Esteem, Social Relationships, and Schoolwork of Biased and Nonbiased Bullying Victimization based on the Logistic Regressions in Table 5-3 ( $N=2,241$ )

*Note:* Estimates control for all covariates listed in Table 5-3.

## **PART B: Health Behavior Among School-aged Children (HBSC)**

Part B of Study 1 extends Part A of Study 1 by examining mental health for victims of bias-motivated bullying in comparison to victims of nonbiased bullying *and* as compared to non-victims (i.e., youth who have not experienced bullying in the past few months). In addition to providing a comparison to non-victims, Part B extends Part A by using measures of mental health that do not presuppose negative effects of bullying, which could have been implied by the question wording in Part A. Rather, the (un)wellness scale is measured separately from bullying. Moreover, this component of the study uses coarsened exact matching to form groups of students who are similar on pre-exposure covariates. This approach allows for a cleaner comparison of students who differ only on the exposure or “treatment” (i.e., bias-motivated victimization) but are similar on all measured, pre-exposure covariates.

Similar to the reasoning in Study 1 Part A, I expect that students who have experienced any bias-motivated victimization will have worse mental health than students who experienced only nonbiased victimization and students who have not been victimized by bullying. This expectation is grounded in both prior empirical research (McDevitt et al., 2001; Russell et al., 2012; Baams, Talmage & Russell, 2017) and theoretical work which contends that prejudicial violence inflicts great harm on victims because the perpetrator of biased incidents communicates a message of group subordination (Perry, 2001; Lantz & Kim, 2019). In addition, victims of bias-motivated victimization may harbor great fear, worry, and anxiety than other types of victims, as they may perceive that because their social characteristics put them at risk for victimization, there is little they can do to prevent future victimization (McDevitt et al., 2001). This fear might then lead to or exacerbate mental health difficulties.

As mentioned in the previous study, much school-based research on biased victimization (particularly studies conducted in Europe) have focused on only one type of bias (e.g., Bayram Özdemir, 2020). Unquestionably, racist bullying and victimization can have serious impacts on youths' health and wellbeing, including increased likelihood of suicide ideation (Cardoso et al., 2018) and depression (Arens & Visser, 2020). A separate – and rapidly expanding – body of research consistently finds that sexual minority youth are bullied more often than non-sexual minority youth (Toomey & Russell, 2016) and that these experiences are highly distressing for young victims (e.g., Tucker et al., 2016). At the same time, research from the adult hate crime literature has found that crimes which are motivated by sexual orientation bias tend to be more violent (Malcom & Lantz, 2021) and more likely to involve victim injury (Lantz & Kim, 2019) than other types of bias crimes.

However, while these specific forms of biased victimization are clearly associated with negative outcomes for students, it is likely that *any* form of biased bullying victimization is more impactful than nonbiased bullying victimization, regardless of the bias type. For instance, research on adults has found that crimes committed on the basis of gender are likely to lead to psychological victim impacts (Mellgren et al., 2021 Williams & Tregidga, 2014), and theoretical explanations for both crime and biased crime emphasize the use of aggression to exhibit normative masculine identity and dominance (Messerschmidt, 1997; Allison & Klein, 2019). Even though past research on biased victimization among youth has not generally focused on religion, studies that do include religious bias in their analyses find that it is associated with depressive symptomatology similarly to the other bias types (Price-Feeney et al., 2018).

In short, the evidence suggests that any form of biased victimization is more influential for student wellbeing than nonbiased victimization. However, relatively little past research has

examined the impacts of biased versus nonbiased bullying victimization for multiple bias types. The current study builds on prior work by examining the impacts of biased victimization related to race or color, religion, and sexuality, which, as measured in the HBSC, likely encompasses victimization targeting females as well as individuals presenting minoritized gender and sexual orientation identities (e.g., homosexuality, transgender).

This study advances the literature on biased bullying by using coarsened exact matching (CEM), which reduces statistical bias in estimates by matching youth on measured covariates and restricting analyses to the matched groups (Blackwell et al., 2009). Using the United States Health Behavior in School-aged Children data (HBSC) ( $n=11,335$ ) from 2009/2010, I compare wellbeing in the past week for victims of biased bullying in the past couple of months, victims of nonbiased bullying in the past couple of months, and nonvictims, using CEM matching to compare youth who are similar on potentially confounding variables. My research question is as follows:

*RQ1: Do youth who have been victims of bias-motivated bullying in the past couple of months experience greater unwellness in the past week than (1) youth who have been victims of non-biased bullying in the past few months and (2) youth who have not been bullied in the past few months?*

### **Study Contributions**

Similar to Part A of Study 1, this analysis is a contribution to current literature on school victimization and hate crime because few prior studies have examined the impacts of biased versus nonbiased bullying victimization in the school setting. I aim test whether adolescent victims of biased bullying have lower wellbeing than victims of nonbiased bullying and nonvictims using a more rigorous analytic approach than what has been used in previous studies to ensure that the inference of the outcomes likely being a consequence of the bullying – and not other experiences – is persuasive. To the author’s knowledge, prior work comparing biased and

nonbiased victimization among youth has not attempted to improve the internal validity of estimates through matching techniques. That is, the vast majority of prior research has used regression-based methods, without an attempt to improve causal inference through limiting comparisons to only observations that are similar on measured covariates (see Lehmann, 2023 for a similar observation). Moreover, unlike the first component of Study 1, Part B also provides a comparison to nonvictims. In addition, this study uses behaviorally-based indicators to measure the consequences of bullying, as the questionnaire asks about mental health without suggesting that these problems are a consequence of the bullying.

### **The Current Study**

The analyses conducted to pursue this goal were split into two sections. First, I compared (un)wellness for biased bullying victims (exposed group) to nonvictims (control group). Second, I compared biased bullying victims (exposed group) to nonbiased bullying victims (control group). Before analyzing each association, I matched students on pre-exposure covariates to increase similarity across groups (aside from bullying victimization exposure). I hypothesized that *youth who have been victims of biased bullying in the past few months will report greater unwellness in the past week than youth who have been victims of nonbiased bullying and youth who have not been bullied in the past few months.*

### **Sample Selection**

The data for Part B of Study 1 came from the HBSC years 2009 to 2010 because these survey years contain measures of bias-motivated bullying victimization (including by bias types) in addition to wellbeing indicators. Unlike Study 4, which excludes grades 5 and 6 from the analyses because these students are not asked several indicators of interest for that study (i.e., weapon carrying), the current analyses analyzed data from all age groups. No variable of interest



for the research questions in the current study is asked of older students but not younger students (or vice versa). In addition, retaining all age groups allows for the largest possible sample size.

### *Measures*

#### *Independent Variables*

Bullying victimization in the HBSC survey is measured with the following introduction and indicator: “Here are some questions about bullying. We say a student is BEING BULLIED when another student, or a group of students, say or do nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a student is teased repeatedly in a way he or she does not like or when he or she is deliberately left out of things. But it is NOT BULLYING when two students of about the same strength or power argue or fight. It is also not bullying when a student is teased in a friendly and playful way” followed by the question: “How often have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months?” Although this indicator asks the students if they have ever been bullied in the past couple of months, I do not use this variable to measure any bullying victimization. Instead, bullying victimization is measured by the more specific questions about types of bullying (to follow) because prior research shows that using behavior-specific indicators is a more valid way to measure bullying (Huang & Cornell, 2015).

After this definition and question about general bullying, the HBSC asks the students “How often have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months in the ways listed below?” with options “I was called mean names, was made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way”, “Other students left me out of things on purpose, excluded me from their group of friends, or completely ignored me”, “I was hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors,” “Other students told lies or spread false rumors about me and tried to make others dislike me,” “I was bullied with mean names and comments about my race or color” “I was bullied with mean names

and comments about my religion”, “other students made sexual jokes, comments, or gestures to me”, “I was bullied using a computer or mail messages or pictures”, “I was bullied using a cell phone”, “I was bullied outside of school using a computer or e-mail messages or pictures” and “I was bullied outside of school using a cell phone.” The student can respond “I have not been bullied in this way in the past couple of months”, “only once or twice”, “2 or 3 times a month”, “about once a week”, or “several times a week.” I dichotomized each type of bullying to equal 1 (yes) if the student reported experiencing that type of bullying at least once in the past couple of months because my research question focuses on the type of bullying victimization rather than its frequency. However, in supplementary analyses, I re-estimated all models where bullying only equals 1 if students report being bullied at least 2 or 3 times a month to assess whether including the less frequent victims affects the findings.

Youth were categorized as either nonvictims (i.e., not a victim of any type of bullying), biased bullying victims (i.e., experienced any bullying involving bias, which included mean names and comments about race or color, religion, or sexual jokes/comments/gestures), or nonbiased bullying victims (experienced only bullying that was not related to bias or did not specify that the bullying involved bias). Youth were categorized this way because nearly all victims who experienced biased bullying also experienced nonbiased bullying (i.e., only 3% of the full sample experienced *only* biased bullying). Consequently, excluding youth who experienced both biased and nonbiased bullying from the biased bullying victims group would fail to capture the majority of youth who experienced biased bullying.

#### *Dependent Variables*

The dependent measure was a wellbeing scale, which consisted of the following questions: “thinking about the last week...” with indicators: “have you felt fit and well”, “have you felt full

of energy”, “have you felt sad”, “have you felt lonely”, “have you had enough time for yourself”, “have you been able to do the things that you want to do in your free time”, “have your parent(s) treated you fairly”, “have you had fun with your friends”, “have you got on well at school”, “Have you been able to pay attention,” with response options “never”, “seldom”, “quite often”, “very often”, or “always.” The indicators “felt lonely” and “felt sad” were reverse-coded for consistency with the other measures. This set of variables was used because they specify in the last week, so it is very likely that at least some bullying occurred before these outcomes. These outcomes were analyzed as numeric variables (always=1 to never=5) and were used to create an “unwellness” scale (i.e., mean of all measures; reliability coefficient =.82). Unwellness was the dependent variable (rather than wellness) for a more intuitive interpretation of the results.

### **Analytic Strategy**

To compare the wellbeing of youth in the exposed versus control groups and infer that the difference across groups is likely attributable to the type of victimization, it is ideal to have two groups of students who are roughly equal each other on all predictors aside from victimization. Because this equality on covariates cannot be achieved through randomization of treatment in observational data (as would be the case in randomized control trials), use of a matching strategy can help reduce the problematic covariate imbalance. The matching strategy used in this study, coarsened exact matching (“CEM”), reduces imbalance across treatment and control groups in observational, nonexperimental data by dividing or ‘coarsening’ variable responses into substantively meaningful groups and then matching treatment and control groups on the ‘coarsened’ variables (Blackwell et al., 2009). The covariates are then ‘un-coarsened’ (i.e., original response options retained) in subsequent regression analyses.

A benefit of coarsened exact matching over other matching techniques is that it does not require that treated observations have an *exact* match in the control group, only that treated observations have a match based on these broadened categories. For instance, matching treatment and control groups on school grades using an exact matching procedure would require that a treated youth with a response of “mostly A's” be compared to a youth who also responded with “mostly A's.” This relatively stringent requirement reduces the possibility that observations will find a match. Yet, if most of the important variation in school grades is between youth who get A's or B's versus youth who get C's, D's, or F's, we can coarsen the ‘grades’ variables to two responses for matching purposes (A's and B's versus C's, D's and F's). Thus, coarsened exact matching requires only that youth in the treated group with A's get matched to kids in the control group who have either A's or B's, which increases the likelihood of successful matching. The cut points for variable matching are user-defined (i.e., the user decides to create a cut point between B's and C's, for example), so the amount of imbalance in the matching solution is controlled by the user.

This approach is preferable to methods like propensity score matching, which require that the user check for balance *after* the groups have been matched and (possibly) re-estimate the matching algorithm if balance has not been achieved. Furthermore, CEM restricts the matched data to areas of common empirical support and is computationally efficient (Blackwell et al., 2009). Balance on covariates through CEM increases our confidence that other measured factors do not confound differences in the wellbeing outcomes across groups. However, the cross-sectional nature of the data limits my ability to test for strict causal effects because I cannot temporally isolate the treatment variable from the other potential confounders.

The CEM strategy is only effective if covariates that are matched occurred prior to exposure or, in the wording of statisticians, “treatment” (i.e., before the bullying). I therefore matched on demographic variables (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, and age), residence classification (rural, urban, suburban, unclassified) and whether the student reports unmet material needs at home, measured using a proxy variable tapping into how often the student reports being hungry when going to bed or school. This variable was measured with the following indicator: “some young people go to bed or school hungry because there is not enough food at home. How often does this happen to you?” With response options “always” “often” “sometimes” and “never.” Finally, I matched on native-born U.S. citizenship, measured as whether the student was born in the U.S.

Following the recommendation of methodologists (Blackwell et al., 2009) and recent work in criminological research (e.g., Lehmann, 2023), I executed CEM matching multiple times (i.e., once for each comparison). The first comparison was restricted to biased bullying victims and nonvictims. The second comparison was restricted to biased bullying victims and nonbiased bullying victims. First, I estimated unadjusted and covariate-adjusted OLS regression models on the unmatched sample to examine the associations between biased bullying victimization and unwellness prior to matching. Second, I assessed covariate imbalance across exposure and controls groups prior to matching. I then executed coarsened exact matching and re-assessed covariate imbalance after matching. Third, I estimated OLS regressions on the matched sample (with “cem\_weights” in STATA; hereafter referred to as “CEM” models) to predict unwellness across the exposure and control groups, not adjusting and then adjusting for the uncoarsened covariates. These models do not use the SVYSET commands because “cem\_weights” were used instead. Missing data in both cases were handled using listwise deletion. Because matching

strategies involve dropping unmatched cases, sample sizes were reduced on the matched samples from the full analytic sample (see Table 5-A7 for exact reductions).

## **Results**

### ***Summary Statistics***

Summary statistics for the pre-match analytic sample are presented in Table 5-7. Regarding bullying victimization in the past couple of months, 27% experienced any biased bullying, 26% experienced only nonbiased bullying, and 47% were not victims of bullying. Of the measured bias types, sexually biased bullying was the most common (experienced by about 21% of the full sample) and biased bullying related to religion was the least common (experienced by about 9% of the full sample). The mean score for unwellness was 2.15 (SD=0.74) on a 1 to 5 scale. The sample contained slightly more males than females (51 vs 49%) and was more than half Non-Hispanic White (55%; hereafter “White”). Approximately 14% of students were Non-Hispanic Black (hereafter “Black”) and 13% were Hispanic. Students identifying as Asian, two or more ethnicities, and as another race/ethnicity (hereafter “Other race/ethnicity”) were each less than 10% of the sample. The average age of students was 13.01 (SD=1.74). About a quarter of the sample attended school in an urban area (26%), and just under half attended school in a suburban area (42%). A total of 27% of students have gone to bed or school hungry either sometimes, often, or always. Finally, 8% of the sample was born outside of the United States.

### ***Biased Bullying Victims Versus Nonvictims Comparison***

The first match involved only nonvictims and victims of biased bullying. Accordingly, I examined covariate imbalance for these two groups before and after matching (see Table 5-8). In the unmatched sample, being female, two or more ethnicities, gone to school/bed hungry, and not being born in the U.S. all significantly differed between biased bullying victims and nonvictims. These differences were reduced to effectively zero after matching (see Panel B in Table 5-8).

Specifically, CEM matching reduced the multiple unbalance indicator score (L1) from .224 to nearly 0 (4.161E-15; see Table A5). For this first match, 17 youth from the control group (i.e., nonvictims) and 41 youth from the exposed group (i.e., biased bullying victims) were not matched and were therefore dropped from the analytic sample.

Next, I estimated two sets of OLS regressions – one on the CEM matched sample and one on the unmatched sample – to assess the associations between unwellness and being a biased bullying victim versus a nonvictim. Table 5-9 presents the unadjusted (Model 1) and adjusted for controls (Model 2) regression estimates on the unmatched (“OLS”) and exactly matched (“CEM”) samples of biased bullying victims and nonvictims. As shown in Panel A (unmatched OLS), biased bullying victimization was associated with a .54 increase in unwellness in the unadjusted model and a .44 increase in unwellness after adjustment ( $b=.54$ ,  $P<.001$ ;  $b=.44$ ,  $P<.001$ ). After CEM matching (Panel B), biased bullying victimization was associated with a .44 unit increase in unwellness unadjusted for covariates ( $b=.44$ ,  $P<.001$ ) and a .42 unit increase in unwellness adjusting for the remaining covariate imbalance ( $b=.43$ ,  $P<.001$ ). In this adjusted, CEM-matched model (Panel B Model 2), each year of age was associated with a .08 unit increase in unwellness ( $P<.001$ ) and being female (relative to being male) was associated with a .18 unit increase in unwellness ( $P<.001$ ). Belonging to the two or more ethnicities racial/ethnic group was associated with a .11 unit increase in unwellness relative to being White ( $P<.001$ ). Finally, having gone to bed or school hungry sometimes, often, or always (versus never) were associated with increases on the unwellness scale ( $b$  ranging from .33 for sometimes to .81 for always,  $P<.001$ ).

### ***Biased Bullying Victims Versus Nonbiased Bullying Victims Comparison***

Next, I compared victims who experienced any biased bullying to victims who experienced only nonbiased bullying. For nonbiased compared to biased bullying victims, the exposure and control groups prior to matching differed on age, being two or more ethnicities, going to bed/school hungry, and not being born in the U.S (see Table 5-10). These differences were effectively reduced to zero after matching, as the multiple unbalanced L1 indicator was reduced from .164 before matching to 5.367E-15 after matching (Table A5). For the second match, 7 students from the control group (nonbiased bullying victims) and 42 from the exposure group (biased bullying victims) were not exactly matched and were dropped from the analysis.

As shown in Table 5-11, biased bullying victimization was associated with a .28 and .22 increase in unwellness relative to nonbiased bullying victimization in the unadjusted and adjusted OLS unmatched models, respectively ( $b=.28, P<.001$ ;  $b=.22, P<.001$ ; see Panel A). The CEM unadjusted model (Panel B Model 1) indicated that biased bullying victimization was associated with a .21 unit increase in unwellness relative to nonbiased victimization not accounting for the uncoarsened covariates ( $b=.21, P<.001$ ). After adjusting for the uncoarsened covariates (Panel B Model 2), the effect was reduced slightly in magnitude, such that biased victimization was associated with a .19 increase in unwellness relative to nonbiased bullying victimization ( $b=.19, P<.001$ ). As with the previous set of regressions, being female and each additional year of age were again both positively associated with unwellness, as were all of the non-reference categories of going to bed or school hungry. Overall, these results indicate that, in comparison to both nonvictims and victims of nonbiased bullying, youth who were victims of biased bullying in the past few months experience greater unwellness in the past week, even when students have been exactly matched on the included pre-exposure covariates.



### *Supplementary Analyses*

To account for potential school-level effects on biased versus nonbiased victimization impacts, I estimated each model accounting for school fixed-effects (see Tables A6 and A7). To assess whether removing victims who experienced bullying once or twice in the past couple of months (versus at least twice a month) from the analyses would affect the findings, I re-estimated all models using a measure of bullying victimization that only included students who reported being bullied 2 or 3 times a month or more (see Tables A8 and A9). The results were similar to the main analyses. Specifically, relative to nonvictims, biased bullying victimization was associated with a .53 and .49 increase in unwellness in these adjusted OLS and CEM models, respectively ( $b=.53, P<.001$ ;  $b=.49, P<.001$ ). Relative to nonbiased victims, biased bullying victimization was associated with a .26 and .23 increase in unwellness in the supplementary adjusted OLS and CEM models, respectively ( $b=.26, P<.001$ ;  $b=.23, P<.001$ ).

### **Discussion**

This study used nationally representative U.S. data to examine whether experiencing biased bullying victimization in the past couple of months was associated with greater unwellness in the past week than experiencing nonbiased bullying victimization as well as not being victimized by bullying. Extending prior research in this area, I used a matching strategy to maximize similarity across exposure and control groups on pre-treatment covariates and included multiple bias types in the analyses. Several key findings emerged.

First, the results indicated that biased bullying was quite common, as 27% of students in the sample experienced some form of bias as a component of their bullying victimization.

Notably, a similar proportion of students— 26% — experienced (only) nonbiased bullying. As general (i.e., nonbiased) bullying is typically considered to be a widespread problem deserving of

considerable policy attention, these findings indicate that bias-motivated incidents are also pervasive and ought to receive a similar degree of concern. In addition, nearly all victims who experienced biased bullying also experienced nonbiased bullying (i.e., 3% experienced *only* biased bullying). As experiencing a greater number of victimization types is associated with greater victim harm than experiencing a fewer number of victimization types (Finkelhor et al., 2007), future research should assess whether the total number of victimization types experienced differs between biased and nonbiased victims.

There is a dearth of research examining biased bullying across multiple bias types in comparison to nonbiased bullying. This gap means that there is not a firm standard against which these prevalence rates can be compared to. For example, Price-Feeney et al. (2018) found that 50% of youth experienced at least one form of bias-based victimization. However, that study did not provide a prevalence rate of nonbiased victimization for comparison. More research assessing the prevalence of biased victimization (for multiple bias types) relative to nonbiased victimization can speak to the whether the findings of the current study will be replicated.

Being victimized by sexually biased bullying, measured as sexual gestures or comments, was more common than racial and religious bias in these data. This result is not consistent with some prior work on youth, which finds that racial bias is most common (Utley et al., 2022). However, it does align with other studies (Bayram Özdemir et al., 2016) as well as with theory (Messerschmidt, 1997) which suggests that biased victimization is commonly perpetrated by males to adhere to gendered cultural norms. It is possible that the high prevalence of sexually biased victimization in the current study is attributable to gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation biases being combined, as sexual comments probably captures all of these types of biases absent more specific indicators.

Second, biased bullying victimization was associated with greater unwellness in comparison to both nonvictims and nonbiased bullying victims, even when students were matched on several pre-exposure covariates. These results are in alignment with prior work on adult crime victims, which finds that bias-motivated incidents cause greater harm than nonbiased incidents (McDevitt et al., 2001). Evidently, biased bullying victimization is associated with deleterious mental health impacts for students as well. Moreover, the current analyses did not capture the *indirect* effects of biased bullying, or the *in terrorem* effects (Weinstein, 1992) of these incidents on non-victims who share the victim's social characteristics (Iganski, 2001). Consequently, the harms of biased victimization reported here, while substantial and important in and of themselves, are likely underestimates of the total damage inflicted by biased victimization. In short, the results imply that biased victimization substantially compromises health and wellbeing among school-aged youth.

Third, although the analyses on the matched sample resulted in estimates that were smaller in magnitude than those from the unmatched sample, all estimates of the effects of biased bullying on unwellness remained statistically significant and substantively large using the matched data. For example, relative to no victimization, biased victimization was associated with a .44 increase in unwellness on a scale of 1-5, indicating that the student scored higher on the unwellness scale in the past week when they had this experience any time in the past few months. The only predictor variable in the models that had a larger impact on unwellness than biased victimization was going to bed and/or school hungry often or always (but not sometimes), which indicates severe lack of basic resources in the home. Broadly, these findings suggest that, even though youth who are victimized by biased bullying differ from students who are not

victimized by biased bullying in ways that might affect their unwellness, the impacts of biased bullying on unwellness are not confounded by these differences.

Taken together, these findings imply that more programming resources should be devoted to understanding, reducing, and preventing biased bullying in schools. As many anti-bullying initiatives currently do not focus on stigma (Earnshaw et al., 2018), programs should place greater emphasis on specifically targeting biased or discriminatory victimization. General anti-bullying solutions that do not address prejudice may not be sufficient, particularly for youth belonging to minoritized groups, who are the most likely to experience biased victimization and harassment (Bucchianeri et al., 2013). Failing to do so could magnify achievement gaps through damage to students' wellbeing at school, which likely affects academic performance.

As the current study found that biased victimization generally – which included bias against race or color, religion, and sexual orientation/gender – related to greater unwellness than nonbiased victimization, school trainings should emphasize that biased victimization is harmful in all its forms. Teachers and other school personnel may believe that certain forms of biased bullying – such as sexual teasing— is expected in adolescence, and therefore be hesitant to step in. In fact, studies show that sexual and gender minority youth report that their teachers often do not intervene when they experience peer harassment (Berger et al., 2019), and this is probably the case for other types of biased victims as well. In light of criminological research which finds that hate crime victims are less likely than other victims to report the incident to the police (Powers et al., 2020; Lantz et al., 2022), it is possible that many students who experience biased victimization also do not report the incident to authorities. School personnel should be made aware of the prevalence, characteristics, and harms of biased bullying so that they can recognize it and intervene, even when the incident is not reported by the victim.

Other promising intervention strategies involve focusing on students. For example, the bystander student intervention (“STAC”) program, which was specifically designed to reduce ethnic bullying, teaches students how to intervene in incidents through role-playing exercises (Midgett et al, 2015). Other interventions draw from social cognitive theory (Tajfel et al., 1971) and intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954) and aim to promote positive intergroup interactions, albeit with limited success (Zambuto et al., 2022). Although such programs are still building a strong evidence base, the findings of this study suggest that their implementation is an important step towards promoting a positive school experience for all students.

### ***Strengths and Limitations***

A strength of the current study is that the exposure (bullying) likely occurred before the outcome (wellbeing) due to the measurement strategy, so the common issue of time-ordering in cross-sectional was at least partially addressed. The matching strategy allowed for assessment of wellbeing for groups of students who were similar aside from their bullying experiences, which increases confidence in the estimates. Even so, matching strategies only account for measured confounding, so unmeasured confounding remains possible. For instance, it is possible that victims of biased victimization are also more likely than other students to experience discrimination by adults outside of school, which might affect wellbeing. Another strength is that these data are nationally representative and therefore have high generalizability in the U.S.

While this study contributes to the literature on school-based victimization in several ways, there are some limitations that should be taken into consideration. First, due to limitations of the data, only a few bias types were measured in this study (race/color, religion, sexual). It would be preferable in future studies to examine forms of sexual orientation and gender based bullying victimization separately, which may require over-sampling of certain groups to obtain

reliable statistical estimates (e.g., transgender individuals). Second, this study did not explore the role of intersectionality, and I was unable to assess how experiencing biased victimization related to multiple minoritized identities may impact unwellness. Given that experiencing multiple forms of biased victimization may lead to greater impacts than one form (Mulvey et al., 2018), future research should consider co-occurrence of biased victimization within individuals.

Third, these data were self-reported, and it is possible that there was (intentional or unintentional) under or over reporting of biased victimization, particularly because biased victimization may invoke feelings of shame among some victims. Finally, it is possible that differences in school-level responses to biased victimization (e.g., reporting policies) influenced the findings of this study. However, the models were each re-estimated with school fixed effects (i.e., using dummy indicator variables for each school). The results did not differ meaningfully from the main results (available by request).

## **Conclusion**

The results of the current study suggest that biased bullying is a serious public health concern because these victims have lower wellbeing than similar peers who have experienced only nonbiased bullying or no bullying. Resources should be directed towards biased bullying victims, and trainings for child-serving professionals in the school context should be informative about the prevalence of biased bullying and the different types of biased bullying being perpetrated in schools.

## CHAPTER 5 PART B - TABLES

**Table 5-7:** Weighted Summary Statistics for Full Analytic Sample, HBSC 2009-2010 ( $N=11,335$ )

	Mean	SD	Scale	N	%
Unwellness Scale (past week; 5=least well)	2.15	0.74	1 5		
Felt full of energy	2.20	1.13	1 5		
Felt fit and well	2.30	1.20	1 5		
Able to pay attention	2.08	1.11	1 5		
Got on well at school	1.96	1.08	1 5		
Had fun with friends	1.80	1.13	1 5		
Parents treated you fairly	1.87	1.18	1 5		
Able to do things you want in free time	2.47	1.34	1 5		
Enough time for yourself	2.45	1.31	1 5		
Feeling lonely (reverse coded)	1.98	1.26	1 5		
Feeling sad (reverse coded)	2.31	1.15	1 5		
Bullying Victimization (past couple of months)					
Any biased bullying				3,072	27
Only nonbiased bullying/did not specify bias				2,978	26
Nonvictim				5,285	47
Age	13.01	1.74	10 17		
Race/ethnicity					
White				5,509	55
Black				1,864	14
Hispanic				2,063	0.1
Asian				417	4
Two or more ethnicities				759	7
Other race/ethnicity				723	7
Gender					
Male				5,757	51
Female				5,578	49
Community Type					
Unclassified				709	4
Urban				3,436	26
Suburban				4,189	42
Rural				3,001	28
How often go to bed/school hungry					
Never				7,354	74
Sometimes				2,087	21
Often				461	4
Always				191	2
Immigrant status					
Not born in the U.S.				974	8

*Notes:* In non-exclusive categories, any sexually biased bullying was reported by  $N=2,362$ , any racially biased bullying was reported by  $N=1,380$ , and any religion based bullying was reported by  $N=975$ .

Table 5-8: Differences between youth who experienced no bullying (control group) and biased bullying victimization (exposure group): covariate balance pre- and post- match

	Panel A: Unmatched			Panel B: Matched		
	Non-Victim	Biased	Difference	Non-Victim	Biased	Difference
Female	0.43	0.54	-0.12***	0.55	0.55	0.00
Age 14-18	0.45	0.43	0.02	0.41	0.41	0.00
White	0.54	0.54	0.01	0.47	0.47	0.00
Black	0.15	0.14	0.00	0.16	0.16	0.00
Hispanic	0.14	0.13	0.01	0.17	0.17	0.00
Two + ethnicities	0.06	0.09	-0.03***	0.09	0.09	0.00
Asian	0.04	0.04	-0.00	0.04	0.04	0.00
Other race/ethnicity	0.08	0.06	0.01	0.06	0.06	0.00
Rural	0.28	0.29	-0.01	0.27	0.27	0.00
Gone to bed/school hungry	0.20	0.37	-0.17***	0.38	0.38	0.00
Not born in the U.S.	0.07	0.09	-0.02**	0.09	0.09	0.00
Observations	5,285	3,072		5,360	3,083	



Table 5-9: OLS and CEM Regression Models Predicting Unwellness for Biased Bullying Victims and Nonvictims

	Panel A: OLS		Panel B: CEM	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Bullying Victimization				
Biased (ref=nonvictim)	0.54*** (0.02)	0.44*** (0.02)	0.44*** (0.02)	0.42*** (0.02)
Female		0.17*** (0.02)		0.18*** (0.02)
Age		0.07*** (0.01)		0.08*** (0.00)
Race/Ethnicity (ref=White)				
Black		-0.04 (0.03)		0.01 (0.02)
Hispanic		0.02 (0.02)		0.00 (0.02)
Two + ethnicities		0.09** (0.03)		0.11*** (0.03)
Asian		0.06 (0.05)		-0.01 (0.04)
Other race/ethnicity		0.04 (0.04)		0.05 (0.03)
Community type (ref=suburban)				
Unclassified		0.04 (0.07)		0.04 (0.03)
Urban		-0.03 (0.02)		-0.01 (0.02)
Rural		0.00 (0.03)		-0.00 (0.02)
Go to bed/school hungry (ref=never)				
Sometimes		0.32*** (0.03)		0.33*** (0.02)
Often		0.63*** (0.06)		0.66*** (0.03)
Always		0.82*** (0.11)		0.81*** (0.05)
Not born US		0.04 (0.03)		0.02 (0.03)
Constant	1.94*** (0.02)	0.90*** (0.07)	2.04*** (0.01)	0.76*** (0.06)
Observations	8,357	8,357	8,299	8,299
R-squared	0.12	0.22	0.08	0.20

Notes: \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05.

OLS regressions are adjusted for the complex survey design using SVYSET in STATA.

95% confidence interval below estimate.

Table 5-10: Differences between youth who experienced nonbiased (control group) and biased (exposure group) victimization: covariate balance pre- and post- match

	Panel A: Unmatched			Panel B: Matched		
	Nonbiased	Biased	Difference	Nonbiased	Biased	Difference
Female	0.54	0.54	-0.01	0.55	0.55	0.00
Age 14-18	0.37	0.43	-0.7***	0.41	0.41	0.00
White	0.57	0.54	0.03	0.47	0.47	0.00
Black	0.14	0.14	-0.01	0.16	0.16	0.00
Hispanic	0.12	0.13	-0.00	0.17	0.17	0.00
Two + ethnicities	0.07	0.09	-0.02*	0.08	0.08	0.00
Asian	0.03	0.04	-0.01	0.04	0.04	0.00
Other race/ethnicity	0.07	0.06	-0.00	0.06	0.06	0.00
Rural	0.27	0.29	-0.02	0.27	0.27	0.00
Go to bed/school hungry	0.28	0.37	-0.10***	0.37	0.37	0.00
Not born in the U.S.	0.07	0.09	-0.03**	0.09	0.09	0.00
Observations	2,978	3,072		2,971	3,030	

Table 5-11: OLS and CEM Regression Models Predicting Unwellness for Biased and Nonbiased Bullying Victims

	Panel A: OLS		Panel B: CEM	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Bullying Victimization				
Biased (ref=nonbiased)	0.28*** (0.02)	0.22*** (0.02)	0.21*** (0.02)	0.19*** (0.02)
Female		0.18*** (0.02)		0.20*** (0.02)
Age		0.06*** (0.01)		0.08*** (0.01)
Race/Ethnicity (ref=White)				
Black		-0.01 (0.04)		-0.01 (0.03)
Hispanic		0.02 (0.03)		0.02 (0.03)
Two + ethnicities		0.07* (0.03)		0.04 (0.03)
Asian		-0.03 (0.06)		-0.02 (0.05)
Other race/ethnicity		-0.01 (0.05)		-0.02 (0.04)
Community type (ref=suburban)				
Unclassified		0.03 (0.06)		0.01 (0.04)
Urban		-0.02 (0.04)		-0.01 (0.02)
Rural		-0.03 (0.03)		-0.05* (0.02)
Go to bed/school hungry (ref=never)				
Sometimes		0.32*** (0.03)		0.31*** (0.02)
Often		0.63*** (0.06)		0.62*** (0.04)
Always		0.64*** (0.10)		0.68*** (0.06)
Not born US		0.04 (0.04)		0.04 (0.03)
Constant	2.20*** (0.02)	1.18*** (0.09)	2.28*** (0.01)	1.01*** (0.07)
Observations	6,050	6,050	6,001	6,001
R-squared	0.04	0.14	0.02	0.14

Notes: \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05

OLS regressions are adjusted for the complex survey design using SVYSET in STATA.

## **Chapter 6. STUDY 2: POLY-VICTIMIZATION**

Victimization incidents do not occur in a vacuum, and being victimized repeatedly and/or by multiple different forms of victimization likely has a greater impact on victims than incidents that occurred in isolation. Accordingly, it is important to examine whether adolescents experience multiple victimizations. Since victimization risk is highest during the pre-adult years (Morgan & Truman, 2018), it is especially important for research to assess multiple victimization in adolescence.

Existing school-based studies examining bias-motivated victimization among youth tend to focus only on the impacts of the incident that was motivated by bias and do not assess whether the targets of bias-motivated victimization also experience nonbiased victimization (e.g., Daly et al., 2020). This omission is concerning because it is well established that experiencing multiple different forms of victimization (i.e., “poly-victimization”) is related to greater psychological distress than experiencing any one type of victimization (Finkelhor et al., 2007). If victims of hate speech are also poly-victims, a complete understanding of the harms of hate speech must account for these other experiences.

However, it remains unclear the extent to which bias-motivated victimization co-occurs with other forms of victimization. The tenants of routine activities/risky lifestyle theories (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Hindelang et al., 1978) suggest high rates of poly-victimization for youth generally, which presumably would include bias-motivated victimization. In addition, bias-motivated victimization disproportionately impacts socially disadvantaged youth, especially racial/ethnic minorities (Bucchianeri et al., 2016; Mitchell et al., 2020), who also tend to be more likely than White youth to experience most forms of nonbiased victimization (Madero-Hernandez & Fisher 2017). On the other hand, target congruence theory (Finkelhor and

Asdigian, 1996) would expect that poly-victimization is not common for victims of bias-motivated victimization because the risk factors should differ across types of victimization (i.e., identity characteristics should be more influential for risk of biased than nonbiased victimization). On the whole, there is insufficient empirical research to discern which of these expectations is supported.

This chapter uses data from the National Crime Victimization Survey School Crime Supplement (2005-2019) to examine the prevalence and co-occurrence of school-based victimization by hate speech, crime, and bullying. I determine which personal characteristics and school contexts are associated with each form of single-type (e.g., hate speech only) and poly-victimization (e.g., hate speech and crime). I then assess impacts on students' fear of attack/harm and place avoidance across the various forms of single-type and poly-victimization. The guiding research question for the current study is:

*RQ1: How often does hate speech victimization co-occur with other forms of school victimization?*

*RQ2: How is hate speech victimization experienced alone (i.e., single-type victimization) and as a component of poly-victimization (i.e., alongside other forms of victimization) associated with fear of violence and place avoidance at school?*

### **Study Contributions**

An analysis of poly-victimization among hate speech victims is an important contribution to current literature because prior studies could have over-estimated the psychological impacts of hate speech victimization by not accounting for other types of victimization that could have contributed to students' experienced harm. Furthermore, although it has been established that poly-victimization is more harmful for youth than single-type victimization, and some work suggests that bias-motivated (vs nonbiased) victimization is related to elevated harms for young victims, it remains unknown the extent to which hate speech victims *are* poly-victims. It is also

unclear how youth who experience both forms of victimization are impacted. The current study brings the literatures on bias-motivated victimization and poly-victimization, respectively, into conversation with each other.

I advance the current literature on hate speech victimization among youth at school by providing an assessment of the extent and nature of poly-victimization among hate speech victims. If I find that being victimized by hate speech, even absent other victimization experiences, is as impactful for youth as bullying and crime, this would imply that schools should treat the occurrence of hate speech as an issue worthy of the attention that is currently accorded to bullying and crime. This finding could have important implications for school programming initiatives. On the other hand, if hate speech victims commonly experience other forms of victimization and it does not appear that victimization types involving bias relate to systematically more fear and avoidance than victimization types not involving bias, then existing prevention and intervention strategies can be adjusted to incorporate hate speech victimization.

### **The Current Study**

First, I examined how often students experience hate speech victimization only relative to experiencing hate speech victimization in addition to other forms of victimization (poly-victimization). Based on target congruence theory, I hypothesized that *hate speech co-occurring with other forms of victimization will be less common than the other forms of victimization co-occurring with each other* (H1). I also assessed the school and student characteristics associated with each form of (single-type and poly) victimization. Next, I analyzed how hate speech victimization experienced alone and as a component of poly-victimization compares to experiencing other forms of victimization (i.e., crime, bullying) in terms of being associated with fear of violence and place avoidance at school. Based on the poly-victimization literature, I

expected that *poly-victimization will be associated with fear and avoidance more strongly than single-type victimization (H2)*. In addition, based on the hate crime literature, I expected that *poly-victimization that includes hate speech will be more strongly related to fear and avoidance than poly-victimization that does not include hate speech (H3)*. Because the element of bias-motivation is expected to be especially detrimental for victims' well-being, poly-victims whose victimization contains hate speech should experience greater psychological problems than poly-victims whose victimization does not contain hate speech.

### **Sample Selection**

The data for study 2 come from SCS survey years 2005-2019. The bullying measure changed in 2005 from one general indicator to multiple specific indicators, so SCS years prior to 2005 have non-comparable bullying measures. Although the 2015 bullying measure is slightly different from the other years (i.e., more bullying indicators are asked in 2015 than other years), 2015 is included because sample size is important for these analyses due to the focus on crime victimization, which is very rare. To summarize, all surveys in SCS years from 2005 to 2019 are included in these analyses except for responses from version two of the questionnaire in 2019, which does not match the historical versions of the questions.

### **Measures**

#### *Independent Variables*

Instead of bias-motivated *bullying* victimization (which was examined in Study 1), this study's focal independent variable was being called hate-related words, hereafter referred to as *hate speech victimization*. The hate speech victimization indicator was included in more survey years than bias-motivated bullying victimization, which is only asked in 2015-onward. Although both hate speech and biased bullying have in common that the incident is (perceived by victims to be)

motivated by bias against social characteristics, hate speech is broader than bullying that it does not necessarily involve the repeated/power imbalance elements that bullying typically implies. In addition, as most youth presumably perceive that incidents are bias-motivated because of hate-related verbalizations, this measure probably captures most incidents perceived by victims as involving bias (even if the incident also involved bullying).

To measure hate speech victimization, the SCS asks the student “During this school year, has anyone called you an insulting or bad name at school having to do with your race, religion, ethnic background or national origin, disability, gender, or sexual orientation? We call these hate-related words.” The student responds yes/no to this question (i.e., been called any type of hate related word, yes=1) and is then asked to specify: “were any of the hate-related words related to your gender?”, “were any of the hate-related words related to your race?” and so on for all the characteristics. The student can respond “yes” to more than one. However, for these analyses, hate speech victimization was coded as 1 if the student experienced during the past school year being called any type of hate-related words.

Criminal victimization included any rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, simple assault, and theft/property recorded in the NCVS incident-level file (i.e., that occurred in the 6 months prior; 1=yes) that occurred at school. Incidents did not have to be reported to the police to be included. Bullying victimization was coded as having occurred (1=bullied) if the respondent reported that another student made fun of or called them names, spread rumors about them, shoved, pushed, or tripped them, tried to make them do things they did not want to do, excluded them, or destroyed their property. Students were then categorized according to which (and how many) forms of victimization they experienced. The focal independent variables for the analyses were three forms of single-type victimization (hate speech only, crime only, bullying



only) and four forms of poly-victimization (hate speech and bullying, hate speech and crime, bullying and crime, hate speech, bullying and crime).

### *Dependent Measures*

Fear of victimization and place avoidance at school were the two dependent measures. Fear of victimization was measured by the question: “How often are you afraid that someone will attack or harm you in the school building or on school property?” I coded fear as equal to 1 if the student reported experiencing fear either “sometimes” or “most of the time” and 0 if the student report experiencing fear either “never” or “almost never.” Place avoidance was coded dichotomously as affirmative if the student reported staying away from any specific location (e.g., lunchroom, bathrooms, etc.) at school, a class, school itself, or extracurricular activities offered at the school because they thought someone might attack or harm them there (1=yes) and 0 if the student reports never having avoided school or somewhere at school because of fear of victimization.

### *Control Variables*

The analyses included several covariates I expected to relate to fear and/or place avoidance at school (not through mediation of the focal independent variables). These covariates were student self-reported sex (1=female), race/ethnicity (categorized as NH White, NH Black, Hispanic, and all other racial/ethnic groups), and age (0=12-14, 1=15-18). I also accounted for grades (Mostly As, Mostly Bs, etc.), educational expectations (i.e., plan to attend school after high school), and any extra-curricular activity involvement (e.g., sports, academic clubs, etc.; 1=yes), which, as proxies for the student’s level of commitment and attachment to school, should influence how students feel while at school. In addition, because the school environment also affects student feelings of safety at school, I controlled for school factors in the analyses. Characteristics of the

school were school type (private or public), perceived gang and gun presence at school (1=yes), perceptions of school discipline as fair (1=agree or strongly agree that rules are fair), security guards, and metal detectors, all reported by the student. Geographic region of the United States was included and categorized as Northeast, Midwest, South, and West. Urbanicity of the youths' home neighborhood (which is often the same as the school) was measured as urban, suburban, or rural, depending on the metropolitan statistical area (MSA) categorization assigned by the NCVS.

### **Analytic Strategy**

Analyses began with a basic description of data (i.e., univariate statistics) providing the frequency of each victimization type (hate speech, criminal, and bullying) as well as the co-occurrence of these types (poly-victimization) in the sample. I then examined the characteristics of youth (e.g., age, gender, race/ethnicity) and the types of school contexts (e.g., private/public) most common in each victimization category (e.g., hate speech only, hate speech and crime). This descriptive information is useful for understanding the social context of these victim types. Moreover, these findings may have implications for practitioners regarding how to best conduct violence prevention and victim services programs in schools. This information can indicate which students are most likely to experience particular combinations of victimization.

I then estimated logistic regression models predicting the odds of fear of attack/harm and place avoidance (separately) by type(s) of victimization first not accounting (Model 1) and then accounting (Model 2) for the control variables. Estimates are presented as odds ratios (with 95% CIs). Predicted probabilities for fear and avoidance by victimization type were calculated and plotted for ease of interpretation. All analyses adjusted for imputation and the complex survey design using the MI and SVY commands in STATA 17.

## **Results**

### ***Summary Statistics***

Weighted summary statistics among youth who took the SCS between 2005 and 2019 are presented in Table 6-1. About 3% of the sample reported feeling fearful of attack or harm at school, whereas around 7% reported staying away from places at school, school itself, or school activities because they were fearful (i.e., avoidance). Experiencing at least one type of victimization was common: a total of 29% of students reported any victimization (71% of the sample were non-victims), although this overwhelmingly consisted of students being only bullied (18% of the full sample). Being victimized by only crime (about 1%) as well as only hate speech (about 2%) were each far less common than bullying only. For poly-victimization, the combination of hate speech and bullying was most prevalent and was reported by about 6% of the sample. The combination of bullying and crime as well as experiencing all three victimization types (hate speech, bullying, and crime) were each reported by about 1% of students, respectively. Notably, the combination of hate speech and crime (without bullying) was nearly non-existent: about half of 1% of the sample experienced this type of victimization (21 students out of 38,644).

### ***Single-Type and Poly-Victimization by Student and School Characteristics***

Table 6-2 presents the percentage of students who experienced each form of single-type and poly-victimization by student and school characteristics. Overall, a larger percentage of females than males experienced any victimization, as 73.33% of males were nonvictims but only 69.49% of females were nonvictims. A higher percentage of males were victimized by crime only (1.31%) as well as hate speech only (2.14%) compared to females (1.08% and 1.65%, respectively), whereas being victimized by bullying only was more common among females

(20.00% vs 15.85%). The combination of hate speech and bullying was also slightly more common among females than males (6.00% vs 5.28%). Differences across gender for the other poly-victimization types were minimal.

Hispanic youth and youth in the “other” racial/ethnic identity category had higher rates of being non-victims (76.18% and 75.77%) than White (69.52%) and Black youth (70.12%). A higher percentage of White youth experienced only bullying victimization (20.60%) than Black youth (16.95%), Hispanic youth (13.68%), and youth in the other race/ethnicity category (11.63%). Conversely, hate speech only was experienced more commonly by youth in the other race/ethnicity category (2.89%), Hispanic youth (2.36%) and Black youth (2.60%) relative to White youth (1.40%). Being victimized by only crime did not differ by race/ethnicity.

For poly-victimization, a lower percentage of Hispanic youth were victimized by bullying and crime (0.86%) relative to all other youth (of whom between 1.12% and 1.34% were victimized by bullying and crime). Black youth experienced a greater prevalence of hate speech and bullying as well as the combination of hate speech, bullying, and crime relative to all other youth. Youth in the racial/ethnic group labeled “other” race/ethnicity also experienced a higher prevalence of hate speech and bullying (relative to White and Hispanic youth). In sum, Hispanic youth were less likely to experience victimization generally, whereas Black youth were more likely to experience most forms of victimization, especially forms involving hate speech.

There were also differences in the prevalence of victimization types across school contexts. In general, rates were similar across community type or were higher in rural areas. Bullying only was most common in rural areas (20.60% of students versus 18.02% in suburban areas and 16.16% in urban areas), as was the combination of hate speech and bullying. Differences by rurality in the other victimization types were small. Students reporting a presence

of gang and gun presence at school, respectively, each had higher percentages of youth being victimized for all the victim types, as did public (vs private) schools, although the differences between public and private schools were smaller than differences between schools with and without guns and gangs. For example, 4.32% of students who reported their schools do not have a gang presence were victimized by hate speech and bullying, whereas 12.30% of students who reported their schools have a gang presence were victimized by hate speech and bullying.

### ***Fear and Avoidance among Single-Type and Poly-Victims***

Tables 6-3 and 6-4 present the results of the logistic regression models predicting fear (Table 6-3) and avoidance (Table 6-4) by victimization type. For each outcome, the first model is unadjusted for control variables and the second model adjusts for all controls. As shown in Model 1 of Table 6-3 (unadjusted), victimization by crime only was not associated with greater fear at school relative to nonvictims. On the other hand, being victimized by bullying only (OR= 5.62; 95% CI= [4.64, 6.79]) and hate speech only (OR=3.54; 95% CI= [2.28, 5.48]) were related to more fear at school relative to nonvictims, although the overlapping confidence intervals for the estimates indicated that these associations did not statistically differ from each other. For poly-victimization, all forms were associated with higher levels of fear relative to nonvictims (ORs ranging from 10.81 to 26.52), though none of the poly-victim types differed statistically from the other poly-victim types. All forms of poly-victimization were associated with significantly more fear than all the forms of single-type victimization with the exception of hate speech and crime, which had a very large confidence interval due to a small number of cases.

For the unadjusted avoidance model (Model 1 in Table 6-4), being victimized by crime only was positively associated with avoidance relative to nonvictims (OR=1.70; 95% CI= [1.09-2.65]), as was hate speech only (OR=3.15; 95% CI= [2.41,4.12]) and bullying only (OR=4.60;

95% CI= [4.13, 5.11]). The associations for crime only and hate speech only were not significantly different from each other, although bullying only was related to significantly more avoidance than both crime only and hate speech only. For poly-victimization, all types were positively associated with avoidance relative to nonvictims (OR ranging from 7.80 to 17.87). However, the combination of bullying and crime had a weaker association with avoidance in comparison to both hate speech and bullying as well as the combination of hate speech, bullying, and crime. All poly-victim types were related to more avoidance than the single-victimization types, again except for hate speech and crime, which was an unreliable estimate due to its infrequency in the sample.

Model 2 in Tables 6-3 and 6-4 provide the results from the models predicting fear and avoidance by victimization type after accounting for all covariates. Figures 6-1 and 6-2 display the predicted probabilities calculated from the odds ratios in Models 3 and 4 for ease of interpretation. Crime only was again not associated with greater fear relative to nonvictims, whereas hate speech only (OR=2.91; 95% CI= [1.85, 4.58]) and bullying only were (OR=4.97; 95% CI= [4.10, 6.04]). However, the associations for hate speech only and bullying only again did not differ statistically from each other. Bullying and crime, hate speech and crime, and hate speech and bullying all had positive associations with fear (ORs ranging from 11.08 to 17.63) that differed from the single victimization types (again except for hate speech and crime). The associations among the poly-victim types did not differ from each other.

For avoidance, the association for crime only was not significant in comparison to nonvictims, although bullying only (OR=4.03; 95% CI= [3.61, 4.51]) and hate speech only (OR= 2.62; 95% CI= [1.98, 3.46]) were positively associated with avoidance. Further, these latter associations differed from each other, with victimization by bullying only being related to more

avoidance than hate speech only. For poly-victimization, the combination of bullying and crime as well as the combination of hate speech and crime were each positively associated with avoidance relative to nonvictims but did not have associations that differed from all the single types. Victimization by both hate speech and bullying (OR=8.58; 95% CI= [7.50, 9.82]) and all three forms of victimization (OR=11.82; 95% CI= [8.66, 16.14]) were each positively associated with avoidance, and these associations differed from all the single types (although they did not differ from each other).

Many of the control variables in Model 2 show expected associations with fear and place avoidance. For instance, students who participate in extracurricular activities at school had lower odds of fear at school compared to students who do not participate in extracurricular activities (OR=.79; 95% CI= [.69, .91]), and students who earn higher (rather than lower) grades also had low odds of fear (OR=.76; 95% CI= [.71, .82]). As expected, gang and gun presence at school were both positively associated with fear of victimization as well as avoidance.

### ***Supplementary Analyses***

Given the overlapping confidence intervals for some estimates in the main models, I combined the victimization types into single, multiple, and no victimization and examined fear and avoidance across these three broad categories to assess the difference in associations when distinctions are not made across types of single and multiple victimization. Tables 6-5 and 6-6 show that both single and multiple victimization are associated with increased odds of fear and avoidance relative to no victimization, and that the estimates for single and multiple are significantly different from each other (i.e., the confidence intervals do not overlap) in both models, even after adjusting for all covariates.

## **Discussion**

This study examined the extent to which adolescent victims of hate speech are poly-victims, such that they experience other forms of (nonbiased) victimization at school in addition to the hate speech. On the one hand, hate speech victims might be targeted by bullying and crime because victimization risk is concentrated among a subset of youth (Rossman & Rosenberg, 1998; Saunders, 2003), and some prior evidence suggests that the risk factors for bias-motivated victimization are similar to those for nonbiased victimization (Van Kesteren, 2016; Waldner & Berg, 2008; Ellonen et al., 2021). On the other hand, I suspected it could be the case that hate speech victims would not often be the victims of crime and bullying because social identity should be a greater risk factor for hate speech than for other forms of victimization. Fear of violence and place avoidance across various forms of single-type and poly victimization were also assessed, as prior research suggests that both poly-victimization (Finkllehor, Omrod and Turner, 2007) and bias-motivated victimization (Russel et al., 2012) each relate to greater psychological impacts than other types of victimization. I expected that poly-victims who were targets of hate speech would have especially high levels of fear and avoidance at school.

I found that although most youth in the sample had not been victimized at school in the past year, a sizeable subset of students were victimized (about 29%). As the data examined in this study consist of a nationally representative sample of over 38,000 youth, these findings reveal that victimization at school affects a substantial number of students each year (about 1,600). In this dataset, 1,300 students (3% of the analytic sample) reported feeling fearful at school most of the time or sometimes, and just under 3,000 students (7% of the sample) avoided places at school, activities at school, or school itself due to fear. Broadly, these findings imply that research should continue to treat peer-victimization at school as an area of high concern.



Moreover, poly-victimization was experienced by a considerable proportion of youth, albeit not as commonly as single-type of victimization. Specifically, about 8% of the sample experienced poly-victimization, whereas about 21% experienced some form of single-type victimization. The most common form of single-type victimization was bullying, reported by 18% of youth. This finding is consistent with prior research which finds that bullying is a widespread and significant social problem (Hymel & Swearer, 2015).

The most common form of poly-victimization was hate speech and bullying, experienced by about 6% of youth. This finding indicates that poly-victimization among hate speech victims is not rare, in contrast to my expectations based on target congruence theory (Finkelhor & Asidian, 1996). Hypothesis 1, which expected that poly-victimization involving hate speech would be less common than the other forms of poly-victimization, is not supported. In contrast, the results indicate that hate speech frequently co-occurs with bullying. Unfortunately, it appears that insults related to identity are often experienced by youth who also endure a consistent pattern of power-based, repeated victimization. On the other hand, poly-victimization by hate speech and crime was rare (<1%), indicating that these forms of victimization almost never occur in combination with each other without bullying being involved as well. I conclude that bullying victimization is nearly ubiquitous among youth who are victimized at school.

Regarding the characteristics of youth who were targeted by these types of victimization, both bullying and the combination of hate speech and bullying were reported by females more commonly than males. This finding stands in contrast to much work on victimization and hate crime, which finds that males are more often victims than females (Gerstenfeld, 2017). Yet, it is consistent with some work on bullying which finds that males and females are victimized at similar rates (Silva et al., 2013; although there are gender differences across types of bullying,

such a verbal and physical). Notably, however, the differences across gender observed in this study were substantively small for many of the victimization, which could imply that gender does not influence risk of school victimization as much as it influences risk of victimization outside of school.

Hate speech only as well as hate speech and bullying were each experienced more often by Black and Hispanic youth than both White youth and youth identifying in the “other” racial/ethnic group. This findings is consistent with prior work which finds that bias-motivated victimization in U.S. schools often targets race/ethnicity minority groups (Russell et al., 2012; Bucchianeri et al., 2016). The findings also indicate that Black and Hispanic youth commonly experience bullying *as well as* hate speech (i.e., a form of poly-victimization), which, to the author’s knowledge, has not been reported in any prior study.

Rural areas had higher levels of bullying only and hate speech and bullying than urban and suburban areas. Even though *nonbiased* victimization is usually higher in urban rather than rural areas (Kosciw et al., 2009), some research has found that certain forms of bias-motivated victimization, such as that targeting LGBTQ students, is higher in rural areas (Huang & Cornell 2017). The results of this study suggest that experiencing both hate speech and bullying is common in rural areas, whereas experiencing hate speech *alone* is not more common in rural areas. Based on these conflicting findings, more work on the contextual factors that influence hate speech prevalence in schools is needed before definitive conclusions can be drawn.

All forms of victimization were more common in schools with (rather than without) gang and gun presence, indicating that school environments that are conducive to crime-related behaviors also promote non-criminal aggression involving bias as well. This finding is consistent with some work which finds that contexts that are conducive to crime generally, such as socially

disorganized communities, have high levels of bias-motivated victimization (Gladfelter et al., 2017). Future research should examine which of the theoretical mechanisms that are often found to be important for school context's influence on crime explain these findings.

Poly-victimization was related to more fear and avoidance at school than single-type victimization, regardless of the specific victimization type. That is, all types of poly-victimization related to more fear and avoidance than all forms of single-type victimization. There were not statistical differences in fear and avoidance across types *within* the categories of single-victimization nor *within* the categories of poly-victimization, with the exception of crime only, which was weakly related to both avoidance and fear. These findings lend support for hypothesis 2, which expected that poly-victimization would be more impactful than single-type victimization. These findings are consistent with the body of work on poly-victimization, which suggests that number of victimization experiences is more important for victim impacts than victimization type (Turner, Finkelhor & Omrod 2010; Felix et al., 2009; Mitchell et al., 2020).

The results therefore suggest that fear and avoidance vary depending on whether the student has experienced single-type versus poly victimization irrespective of *which* victimization types are experienced. Hypothesis 3, which expected that bias would elevate harms beyond nonbiased victimization, is not supported. Thus, it appears that prior work may have over-estimated impacts of bias alone by not accounting for other types of victimization. However, the analyses presented here did not compare victims who experienced victimization similarly in all ways aside from the bias element (e.g., the frequency by which each type of victimization was experienced was not accounted for), so conclusions regarding whether bias-motivated victimization is more impactful than nonbiased victimization remain preliminary.

However, it is important to note that students who experienced only hate speech had similar levels of fear as students who experienced only bullying (though bullying only related to more avoidance than hate speech only). That hate speech appears to be as important for fear at school as bullying suggests that both research and school interventions should dedicate as many resources towards reducing hate speech in schools as they currently give to bullying prevention. In addition, as these analyses suggest that for a nontrivial number of students, hate speech and bullying victims are the same individuals, existing bullying prevention programming can be altered to address identity-based attacks more explicitly.

Unexpectedly, crime only was not related to fear of violence or place avoidance at school as strongly as bullying only or hate speech only. Presumably, incidents categorized as crime by the NCVS should be relatively serious and thus fear-provoking. I suspect that this finding could be because property crime is included in the crime measures, which might be less strongly related to fear and avoidance because they does not involve direct contact with the offender.

These findings have implications for guiding school personnel in their efforts to prevent and reduce school victimization. As hate speech appears to target many youth alongside bullying, schools should aim to incorporate initiatives that focus on hate speech and bias into their bullying prevention programming. For example, some schools have implemented inclusive curricula, cultural groups led by students, and the hiring of equity specialists, though there is little evidence evaluating the effectiveness of these approaches (Ramirez et al., 2022). Another tactic is to focus on social-emotional learning (“SEL”) strategies, some of which have been demonstrated as effective for reducing homophobic name-calling and bullying of students with disabilities (Espelage et al., 2015). Counselors should also investigate whether youth who report being bullied also experience hate speech, keeping in mind that the risk factors for this form of

poly-victimization include being female, identifying as Black or Hispanic, and living in a rural area with a gun and/or gang presence at school.

Along with the other forms of poly-victimization, hate speech and bullying related to more fear or violence or place avoidance at school than either hate speech or bullying experienced separately. Thus, youth who experience both hate speech and bullying may be at highest risk of negative outcomes post-victimization. Given the detrimental impacts fear and avoidance at school can have for educational achievement (Barrett, Jennings, & Lynch, 2012), this high-risk subgroup of victims may require prioritized intervention. Consistent with lifestyle/routine activities theory, I found that hate speech victimization often clusters among individuals who also experience other forms of victimization. This result suggests that even if social characteristics are relatively more important for risk of hate speech victimization, some risk factors are likely similar for nonbiased and bias-motivated victimization. Future research should continue to test the risk factors for being a poly-victim who has experienced hate speech.

### ***Strengths and Limitations***

This study has several strengths. The analyses examine nationally representative data over a span of fourteen years, so the findings are generalizable, and the conclusions apply beyond one geographic area or point in time. The large sample size of the data analyzed in this study was well suited for these analyses, as some forms of victimization (especially criminal victimization) is relatively rare in a general population samples. As previous research has rarely examined victims who experience both crime and hate speech, the current study extends current work. Moreover, few prior studies have focused specifically on poly-victimization *at school*, despite the practical implications that such analyses have for school programming.

However, this study has some limitations that must be noted. These analyses examine cross sectional data, so the direction of causality is assumed rather than tested. It is possible that being fearful or avoiding places at schools makes a student a more vulnerable target for victimization (or for particular types of victimization). Absent data measuring the same individuals over time, the direction of causality can only be presumed from prior research. The author is not aware of any contemporary large scale data collections focused on poly-victimization that follow students longitudinally.

Each type of victimization analyzed in this study contain multiple categories of experiences, which may mask some variation within the broader categories. For example, bullying consists of multiple different types of aggression (e.g., verbal, physical, etc.). It may be that fear and avoidance differ for bullying that is verbal versus bullying that is primarily physical, or that poly-victimization by physical bullying and hate speech is more impactful than poly-victimization by verbal bullying and hate speech. Future research should delve deeper into these nuances. Notably, it is likely that many youth experience more than one of these types of bullying, so the number of categories that would need to be assessed is probably very high.

Relatedly, this study only examined three forms of school-based victimization and their co-occurrence at school. It is possible that students were also affected by victimization types not included in the study, such as child maltreatment in the home or crime outside of school. This limitation implies that the prevalence of poly-victimization is probably even higher than was observed in the current study. However, as the outcomes examined in this study were students' fear and avoidance *at school*, it is unlikely that these other forms of victimization had a strong effect of the outcomes examined the current study.

Victimization, fear, and avoidance were all self-reported measures. Students differ from each other in terms of their under-reporting of these experiences and their tendency to be affected by social desirability bias. For example, willingness to report feeling fearful may vary across sociodemographic characteristics, as adolescent males who live in communities emphasizing norms of toughness may be especially likely to underreport feeling fearful. Moreover, the characteristics of students experiencing each type of victimization are not identical, so some of the differences across victimization types in the outcomes could reflect youth in that category being more or less likely to report fear/avoidance or victimization. However, using official data on victimization is also imperfect, and self-reported measures are probably a more sensitive and realistic measure of victimization prevalence.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study indicate that it is not uncommon for the perpetrators of hate speech and bullying to target the same victims, so poly-victimization is not rare among youth who are victimized by hate speech. In addition, fear of violence at school was as high for victims of hate speech as it was for victims of bullying, and there were not differences in either fear and avoidance across the types of poly-victimization that included versus excluded hate speech. These results underscore the need for school victimization prevention efforts to dedicate more resources to combatting hate speech, which can be incorporated into existing anti-bullying programs. Future research focusing on the adverse impacts of school-based hate speech should aim to account for poly-victimization when possible.

## CHAPTER 6 – TABLES

Table 6-1. Summary Statistics of Study Variables, NCVS SCS 2005-2019 (N=38,644)

	% or Mean (SD)	N
Dependent Variables (previous school year)		
Place Avoidance	7%	2,802
Fear at School	3%	1,358
Any Victimization (previous school year)	29%	11,116
Single-Type Victimization (previous school year)		
Crime only	1%	467
Bullying only	18%	6,968
Hate Speech only	2%	728
Poly-Victimization (previous school year)		
Bullying and Crime	1%	493
Hate Speech and Crime	<1%	22
Hate Speech and Bullying	6%	2,183
Hate Speech, Bullying, and Crime	1%	254
Covariates		
Any extracurricular involvement	67%	25,795
Aspire to attend higher education	93%	36,053
Grades	3.19 (0.006)	
Fairness of school rules	1.86 (0.004)	
Gang Presence	17%	6,118
Gun Presence	4%	1,523
Metal Detectors	11%	3,953
Guards	70%	26,984
Public school	92%	35,626
Northeast	17%	5,495
Midwest	24%	9,975
South	36%	14,098
West	24%	9,076
Urban	29%	10,763
Suburban	55%	21,783
Rural	16%	6,098
Female	49%	18,938
White	56%	22,526
Black	15%	4,732
Other race	8%	3,039
Hispanic	21%	8,347
Age	14.82 (0.011)	



Table 6-1. Summary Statistics of Study Variables, NCVS SCS 2005-2019 (N=38,644) (Continued)

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Survey Year		
2005	12%	5,416
2007	15%	5,722
2009	15%	4,414
2011	14%	5,857
2013	14%	5,008
2015	7%	2,344
2017	14%	6,199
2019	9%	3,684

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Table 6-2. Single-Type and Poly-Victimization (previous year) by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (N=38,644)

	Females	Males	White	Black	Hispanic	Other race
No Victimization	69.49%	73.33%	69.52%	70.12%	75.77%	76.18%
Single-Type Victimization (total)	22.73%	19.30%	23.20%	20.89%	17.22%	15.82%
Crime only	1.08%	1.31%	1.20%	1.34%	1.18%	1.13%
Bullying only	20.00%	15.85%	20.60%	16.95%	13.68%	11.63%
Hate Speech only	1.65%	2.14%	1.40%	2.60%	2.36%	2.89%
Poly-Victimization (total)	7.72%	7.37%	7.23%	8.94%	6.97%	8.16%
Bullying and Crime	1.10%	1.29%	1.34%	1.20%	<1%	1.12%
Hate Speech and Crime	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Hate Speech and Bullying	6.00%	5.28%	5.23%	6.83%	5.55%	6.47%
Hate Speech, Bullying, and Crime	<1%	<1%	<1%	1.00%	<1%	<1%

Note: Column totals do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 6-2 Cont'd. Single-Type and Poly-Victimization (previous year) by School Characteristics (N=38,644)

	No Gangs		No Guns		Public	Private	Urban	Suburban	Rural
No Victimization	74.56%	55.45%	72.52%	46.04%	71.02%	76.55%	72.62%	71.53%	69.02%
Single-Type Victimization	19.65%	27.91%	20.60%	30.36%	21.19%	18.80%	19.66%	21.10%	23.11%
Crime only	1.11%	1.67%	1.21%	1.06%	1.26%	0.58%	1.39%	1.20%	0.91%
Bullying only	16.94%	22.79%	17.54%	26.17%	17.99%	16.75%	16.16%	18.02%	20.60%
Hate Speech only	1.60%	3.45%	1.85%	3.13%	1.94%	1.47%	2.11%	1.88%	1.60%
Poly-Victimization	5.78%	16.65%	6.87%	23.61%	7.79%	4.67%	7.70%	7.35%	7.88%
Bullying and Crime	0.97%	2.38%	1.12%	2.96%	1.25%	0.65%	1.30%	1.19%	1.01%
Hate Speech and Crime	<1%	1.00%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Hate Speech and Bullying	4.33%	12.34%	5.13%	17.59%	5.80%	3.66%	5.62%	5.47%	6.20%
Hate Speech, Bullying, and Crime	<1%	1.84%	<1%	2.80%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

Note: Column totals do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 6-3: Odds Ratios and 95% CIs of Fear by Type(s) of Victimization (N= 38,644)

Victimization Type (ref=no victimization)	M1:Fear		M2:Fear	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Crime only	0.87	(0.32 - 2.37)	0.80	(0.29 - 2.20)
Bullying only	5.62***	(4.64 - 6.79)	4.97***	(4.10 - 6.04)
Hate Speech only	3.54***	(2.28 - 5.48)	2.91***	(1.85 - 4.58)
Hate Speech and Bullying	17.15***	(13.95 - 21.08)	12.61***	(10.05 - 15.84)
Hate Speech and Crime	10.81**	(2.31 - 50.60)	11.08**	(2.65 - 46.29)
Bullying and Crime	14.78***	(10.86 - 20.09)	11.71***	(8.54 - 16.05)
Hate Speech, Bullying, and Crime	26.52***	(19.40 - 36.26)	17.63***	(12.47 - 24.93)
Covariates				
Any extracurricular involvement			0.79**	(0.69 - 0.91)
Aspire to attend higher education			0.81	(0.65 - 1.00)
Grades			0.76***	(0.71 - 0.82)
Gang Presence			1.61***	(1.37 - 1.88)
Gun presence			1.39**	(1.11 - 1.75)
Detectors			1.32**	(1.11 - 1.58)
Guards			1.10	(0.92 - 1.32)
Fairness of school rules			1.43***	(1.24 - 1.65)
Public school (ref= private school)			1.58**	(1.14 - 2.21)
Midwest (ref= northeast)			0.84	(0.67 - 1.04)
South			1.01	(0.82 - 1.25)
West			0.95	(0.72 - 1.24)
Urban (ref= suburban)			1.39***	(1.21 - 1.61)
Rural			0.82	(0.65 - 1.03)
Black (ref= white)			1.20	(0.98 - 1.48)
Other			1.19	(0.89 - 1.59)
Hispanic			1.33**	(1.11 - 1.58)
Female (ref= male)			1.29***	(1.13 - 1.47)
Age			0.89***	(0.86 - 0.92)
2007 (ref= 2005)			0.98	(0.78 - 1.23)
2009			0.89	(0.70 - 1.13)
2011			0.76*	(0.59 - 0.98)
2013			0.93	(0.70 - 1.24)
2015			0.94	(0.66 - 1.35)
2017			1.31*	(1.02 - 1.67)
2019			1.12	(0.84 - 1.51)
Constant	0.01***	(0.01 - 0.01)	0.10***	(0.05 - 0.21)

Note: \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05

**Table 6-4: Odds Ratios and 95% CIs of Avoidance by Type(s) of Victimization (N=38,644)**

	M1: Avoidance		M2: Avoidance	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Victimization Type (ref=no vict.)				
Crime only	1.70*	(1.09 - 2.65)	1.51	(0.97 - 2.36)
Bullying only	4.60***	(4.13 - 5.11)	4.03***	(3.61 - 4.51)
Hate Speech only	3.15***	(2.41 - 4.12)	2.62***	(1.98 - 3.46)
Hate Speech and Bullying	11.71***	(10.29 - 13.32)	8.58***	(7.50 - 9.82)
Hate Speech and Crime	11.48***	(4.58 - 28.75)	10.48***	(4.22 - 26.01)
Bullying and Crime	7.80***	(5.98 - 10.16)	5.92***	(4.48 - 7.82)
Hate Speech, Bullying, and Crime	17.87***	(13.34 - 23.94)	11.82***	(8.66 - 16.14)
Covariates				
Any extracurriculars			1.03	(0.93 - 1.14)
Aspire to higher ed.			0.98	(0.80 - 1.20)
Grades			0.83***	(0.79 - 0.88)
Gang Presence			1.80***	(1.60 - 2.03)
Gun presence			1.77***	(1.51 - 2.08)
Detectors			1.15	(0.98 - 1.36)
Guards			1.12	(1.00 - 1.27)
Fairness of school rules			1.21***	(1.10 - 1.33)
Public school (ref= private)			1.40**	(1.10 - 1.77)
Midwest (ref= Northeast)			0.93	(0.79 - 1.09)
South			0.96	(0.83 - 1.11)
West			1.06	(0.91 - 1.24)
Urban (ref= suburban)			0.83**	(0.74 - 0.93)
Rural			1.21**	(1.08 - 1.35)
Black (ref=White)			1.23**	(1.06 - 1.42)
Other			0.97	(0.79 - 1.18)
Hispanic			1.32***	(1.16 - 1.50)
Female (ref=male)			1.09	(1.00 - 1.19)
Age			0.89***	(0.87 - 0.91)
2007 (ref=2005)			1.34***	(1.13 - 1.58)
2009			0.96	(0.79 - 1.17)
2011			1.05	(0.89 - 1.25)
2013			1.07	(0.89 - 1.28)
2015			1.24	(0.96 - 1.60)
2017			1.45***	(1.21 - 1.74)
2019			1.47***	(1.21 - 1.80)
Constant	0.03***	(0.03 - 0.04)	0.16***	(0.09 - 0.29)

Note: \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05

Table 6-5: Odds Ratios and 95% CIs of Fear by Type(s) of Victimization (N=38,644): Supplemental Analysis

	M1: Fear		M2: Fear	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Victimization Type (ref= no victimization)				
Single	5.14***	(4.25 - 6.21)	4.50***	(3.70 - 5.46)
Multiple	17.47***	(14.41 - 21.18)	12.80***	(10.36 - 15.82)
Covariates				
Any extracurricular involvement			0.79**	(0.69 - 0.91)
Aspire to attend higher education			0.81	(0.65 - 1.01)
Grades			0.76***	(0.70 - 0.82)
Gang Presence			1.61***	(1.37 - 1.89)
Gun presence			1.42**	(1.13 - 1.78)
Detectors			1.33**	(1.11 - 1.58)
Guards			1.09	(0.91 - 1.30)
Fairness of school rules			1.44***	(1.25 - 1.66)
Public school (ref= private school)			1.57**	(1.13 - 2.18)
Midwest (ref= Northeast)			0.84	(0.67 - 1.04)
South			1.01	(0.82 - 1.25)
West			0.94	(0.72 - 1.23)
Urban (ref= suburban)			1.39***	(1.20 - 1.60)
Rural			1.15	(0.92 - 1.42)
Black (ref=White)			1.18	(0.96 - 1.46)
Other			1.16	(0.87 - 1.55)
Hispanic			1.30**	(1.09 - 1.55)
Female (ref=male)			1.31***	(1.15 - 1.49)
Age			0.88***	(0.85 - 0.91)
2007 (ref=2005)			1.00	(0.80 - 1.25)
2009			0.91	(0.72 - 1.16)
2011			0.78*	(0.61 - 1.00)
2013			0.95	(0.72 - 1.27)
2015			0.96	(0.68 - 1.37)
2017			1.34*	(1.04 - 1.71)
2019			1.16	(0.87 - 1.55)
Constant	0.01***	(0.01 - 0.01)	0.05***	(0.02 - 0.11)

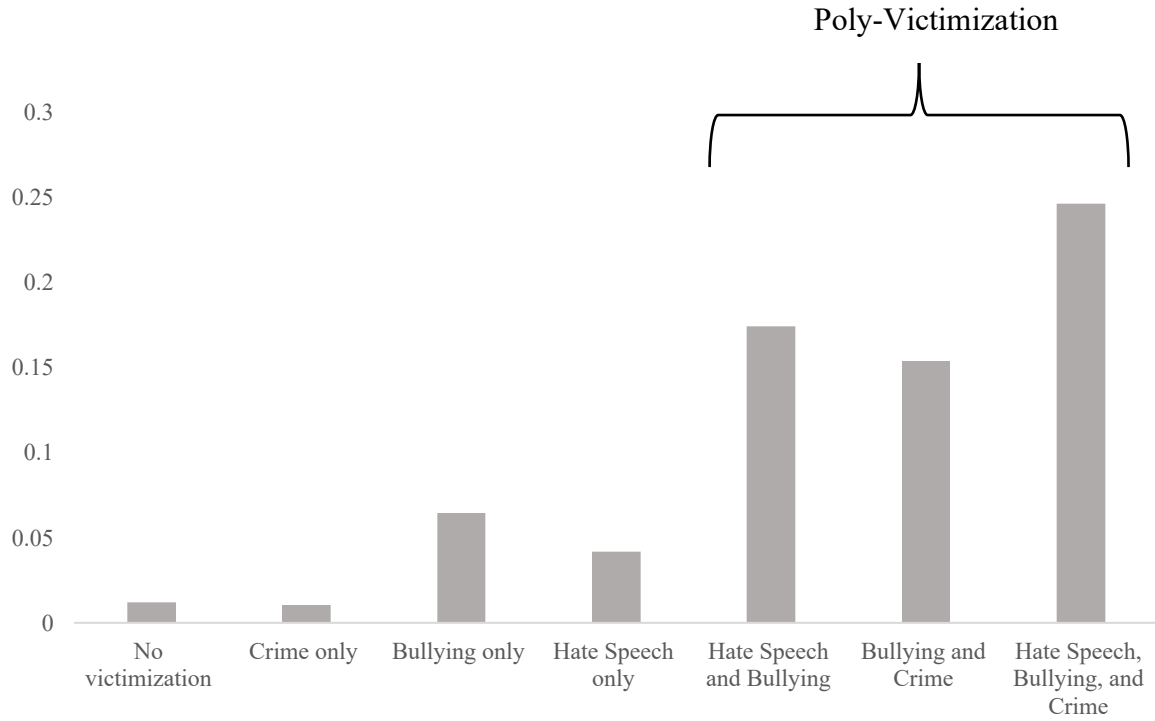
Notes: \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05

Table 6-6: Odds Ratios and 95% CIs of Avoidance by Type(s) of Victimization (N=38,644): Supplemental Analysis

	M1: Avoidance		M2: Avoidance	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Victimization Type (ref=no victimization)				
Single	4.28***	(3.87 - 4.74)	3.72***	(3.35 - 4.14)
Multiple	11.49***	(10.18 - 12.96)	8.36***	(7.35 - 9.49)
Covariates				
Any extracurricular involvement			1.03	(0.93 - 1.14)
Aspire to attend higher education			0.98	(0.80 - 1.20)
Grades			0.83***	(0.79 - 0.87)
Gang Presence			1.80***	(1.60 - 2.03)
Gun presence			1.80***	(1.54 - 2.10)
Detectors			1.16	(0.98 - 1.37)
Guards			1.11	(0.99 - 1.25)
Fairness of school rules			1.22***	(1.11 - 1.34)
Public school (ref= private school)			1.38**	(1.09 - 1.75)
Midwest (ref= Northeast)			0.93	(0.79 - 1.09)
South			0.96	(0.83 - 1.11)
West			1.06	(0.91 - 1.24)
Urban (ref= suburban)			1.20**	(1.08 - 1.34)
Rural			1.13	(0.98 - 1.30)
Black (ref=White)			1.22**	(1.05 - 1.41)
Other			0.95	(0.78 - 1.17)
Hispanic			1.30***	(1.15 - 1.48)
Female (ref=male)			1.11*	(1.01 - 1.21)
Age			0.89***	(0.86 - 0.91)
2007 (ref=2005)			1.35***	(1.15 - 1.60)
2009			0.98	(0.81 - 1.18)
2011			1.07	(0.90 - 1.27)
2013			1.09	(0.90 - 1.31)
2015			1.25	(0.97 - 1.62)
2017			1.47***	(1.23 - 1.77)
2019			1.51***	(1.24 - 1.84)
Constant	0.03***	(0.03 - 0.04)	0.10***	(0.06 - 0.18)

Notes: \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05

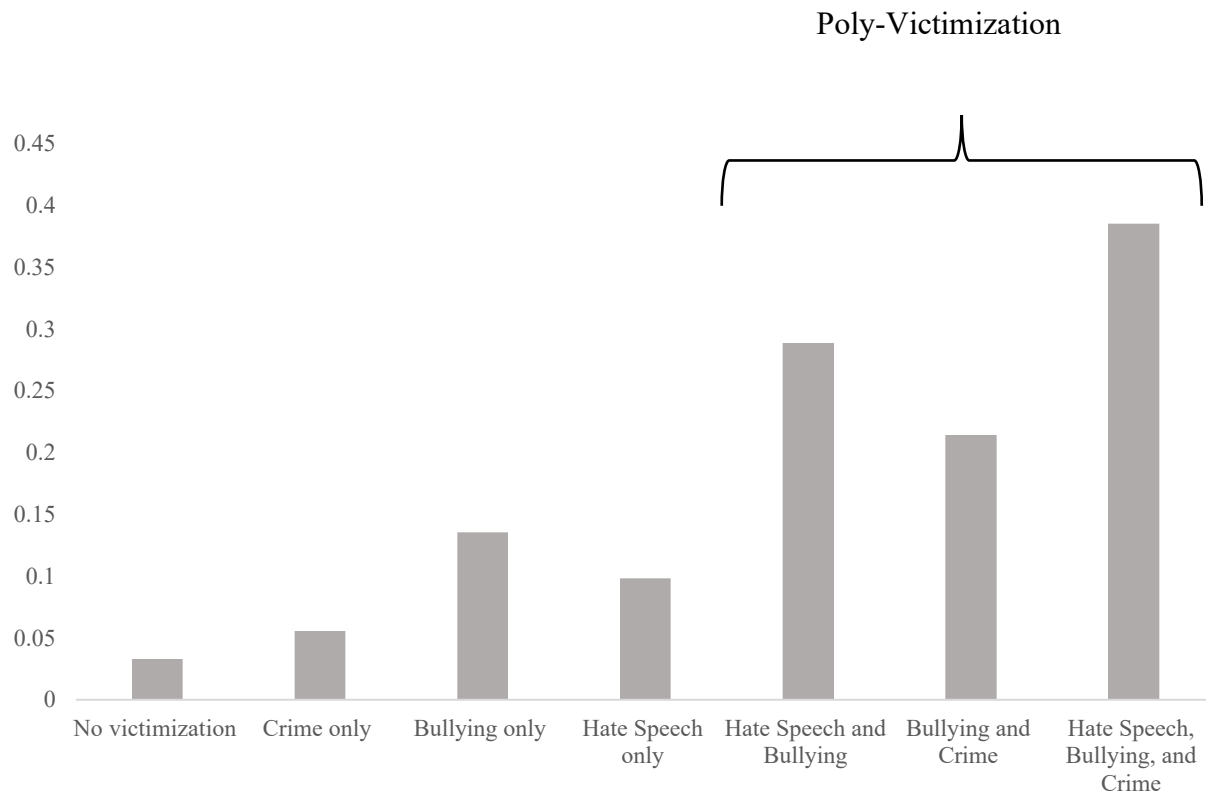
**CHAPTER 6 – FIGURES**



**Figure 6-1.** Predicted probabilities of fear by victimization type based on the logistic regression shown in Model 2 of Table 6-3 ( $N=38,644$ )

*Note:* The hate speech and crime category was excluded from the visualization because of its extreme infrequency in the sample.





**Figure 6-2.** Predicted probabilities of avoidance by victimization type based on the logistic regression shown in Model 2 of Table 6-4 ( $N=38,644$ )  
*Note:* The hate speech and crime category was excluded from the visualization because of its infrequency in the sample.

## Chapter 7. STUDY 3: PREDICTORS OF BIASED VICTIMIZATION AND PERPETRATION

### **PART A: The Victim-Perpetrator Overlap for Biased Bullying**

One finding that has emerged from the school victimization literature is evidence of a bullying “victim-offender overlap,” or the phenomenon wherein a subset of youth both bully others and are bullied themselves (i.e., “bully-victims”; Hayne et al., 2001; Nansel et al., 2001). Most existing research on bully-victims has focused on either their prevalence in schools or on the health and behavioral outcomes associated with being both a victim and perpetrator of bullying (relative to being a victim only or perpetrator only; Holt & Espelage, 2007; Loch et al., 2020). Research has seldom examined whether particular types of bullying perpetration are associated with victimization by that same type of bullying, or *specificity* in the bully-victim overlap. For example, do children who experience physical bullying victimization bully other students physically more often than verbally?

The focus of the current study is on a potential type-specific, victim-offender overlap for biased (i.e., bias-motivated or prejudicial) bullying. Specifically, I investigate the extent to which youth who perpetrate biased bullying are also victimized by biased bullying. This association is then compared to the association between biased bullying perpetration and *nonbiased* bullying victimization (and, conversely, to the association between *nonbiased* bullying perpetration and biased bullying victimization). Youth might both perpetrate and be victimized by biased bullying because some peer groups are likely to be especially promotive of – or tend to provide social rewards for – particular *types* of bullying over others. This type-specific linkage in the bullying victim-offender overlap would align with theoretical explanations for youth aggression that emphasize social learning (Sutherland, 1947; Akers 1996) and the situational influences of peers (Weerman et al., 2018).

Prior literature suggests frequent involvement in certain contexts or situations lead to both victimization and perpetration. Less clear is whether some contexts are particularly conducive to biased (but not nonbiased) bullying victimization and perpetration. Yet, some contexts, situations, or lifestyles may be particularly conducive to biased victimization based on social learning (Sutherland, 1947; Akers 2015) and situational peer influence (Weerman et al., 2018) theories, which suggest that norms about aggression – and its social acceptance – are communicated in peer groups. Social learning theory posits that individuals engage in crime because their social interactions expose them to antisocial norms which indicate that certain criminal behaviors are acceptable in that context (Sutherland 1947). Extending this perspective, Akers (2015) introduced the notion that behavioral reinforcements further influence delinquent behavior. Thus, some peer contexts or social circles may influence biased victimization through socialization. Alternatively, situational opportunity theory would expect that the *instantaneous* social rewards for certain types of behavior are boosted in some situations (i.e., not through norm transference; Warr, 2002; Weerman et al. 2018), also implying that certain peer groups would be highly conducive to biased victimization and perpetration.

Most of the existing literature on the victim-offender overlap for bullying has focused on a general overlap, such that perpetration and victimization are related regardless of the type of bullying (e.g., Goldbach et al., 2018). Even so, there is some evidence of specificity, as a handful of studies have found that perpetration of a particular type of bullying is positively associated with victimization by the same type of bullying. For example, Stubbs-Richardson and May (2021) found that, for verbal, physical, and relational bullying, youth who had engaged in perpetrating a type of bullying were more likely to experience that same form of bullying as a victim. They explain: “the likelihood of experiencing a type of bullying victimization increased the most when one engaged in

that type of bullying and when one's peers experienced that same type of bullying" (Stubbs-Richardson & May, 2021: P. 762). The authors of this study suggest that their findings may be explained by group social norms, which condone certain types of bullying but reject others. In other words, youth learn which *specific* behavior is rewarded or is favorable in their social context.

Regarding biased bullying, a couple of studies have found evidence of victimization and perpetration by the same individuals. Although the victim-offender overlap was not the primary focus of their study, Hatchel et al. (2020) found that a group of youth in their sample who engaged in homophobic bullying perpetration and were also targeted by homophobic bullying. The authors pointed to social learning theory (Bandura, 1969) as an explanation for this finding, speculating that youth who are victimized by a certain type of bullying (or who witness it in their peer groups) observe positive reinforcement from others and take part themselves to gain social acceptance. Also not focusing on a victim-perpetrator overlap, Ellonen et al. (2021) found that perpetrating hate crime was positively associated with hate crime victimization among Finnish adolescents. However, neither study examined the biased victim-perpetrator overlap across multiple bias types in a national sample of U.S. youth. Galan et al. (2021) found that biased perpetration was associated with biased victimization, though a comparison to nonbiased bullying was not provided.

Knowledge of whether biased bullying victimization and perpetration cluster together within students adds to understanding of the etiology of biased bullying and is useful for tailoring intervention and prevention strategies to reduce its prevalence and harms. Moreover, this analysis also reveals whether biased and *nonbiased* bullying cluster together within students, which is suggestive as to whether schools should implement different approaches to targeting biased bullying than they do for nonbiased bullying. As biased victimization can cause harm to direct victims (Russell et al., 2012), vicarious victims who share the victim's characteristics (Iganski,

2001; Perry & Alvi, 2012), and a school climate of inclusivity (Perry, 2015), it is critical that child-serving professionals be provided with accurate information regarding whether bullying involving prejudice is distinct from other forms of school bullying.

The current study uses the 2009-2010 Health Behavior in School-aged Children survey (HBSC) to determine whether there is an association between biased bullying perpetration and victimization. I then compare this association to the associations between biased and nonbiased bullying victimization and perpetration. I also determine which students are most likely to be victim-offenders of biased bullying. Given evidence that biased victimization is especially likely to involve males (Bayram Ozdemir et al., 2016), it is reasonable to expect that the victim-offender overlap for biased bullying disproportionately consists of male students. The research questions are as follows:

*RQ1: Are youth who have been perpetrators of biased bullying likely to also be victims of biased bullying, and is this association stronger than the connections between biased and nonbiased victimization and perpetration?*

*RQ2: Among whom is the victim-perpetrator overlap for biased bullying most prominent?*

### **Study Contributions**

Although the cross-sectional nature of the data preclude a test the causal direction of these associations (i.e., whether the victimization occurred before or after the perpetration), this analysis provides an important contribution to the literature by taking an initial step towards establishing whether there are children who both experience and perpetrate prejudicial bullying. To the author's knowledge, this is the first study to focus on assessing the victim-offender overlap for biased *and* nonbiased bullying, especially in a large, nationally representative sample of youth living in the United States.

## **The Current Study**

The present study seeks to improve understanding of biased bullying and the nature of the bullying victim-offender overlap by examining whether there is a type-specific victim-offender overlap for biased bullying in a national sample of youth. Specifically, I assess whether there is an association between biased bullying perpetration and biased bullying victimization. Consistent with social learning theory (Sutherland, 1947; Akers 1996) and accounts of delinquency which emphasize peer influence through situational opportunity (Weerman et al., 2018; Warr 2002), I hypothesize that *biased bullying perpetration will be positively associated with biased bullying victimization (H1)*, and that *this association will be stronger than the associations between biased and nonbiased bullying perpetration and victimization (H2)*. I then assess for whom the biased bullying victim-perpetrator overlap is most prominent. Specifically, I examine the predicted probabilities of biased victimization by type of bullying perpetration for hypothetical “ideal types,” or subsets of children who contain traits of interest. In addition to examining differences across gender, which is associated with both biased crime and aggression (Bayram Ozdemir et al., 2016), I use the findings from the first component of the analysis to guide this second component of the analysis.

## **Sample Selection**

This study analyzes the 2009-2010 HBSC because this survey contains measures of biased bullying victimization and perpetration. I exclude grades 5 and 6 from the analytic sample because these students are not asked several indicators of interest that may indicate the risk factors for biased bullying and perpetration (i.e., fighting). The final analytic sample is  $N=8,739$ .

## *Measures*

### *Dependent Variable*

Bullying victimization in the HBSC survey is first introduced to students in with the following “Here are some questions about bullying. We say a student is BEING BULLIED when another student, or a group of students, say or do nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a student is teased repeatedly in a way he or she does not like or when he or she is deliberately left out of things. But it is NOT BULLYING when two students of about the same strength or power argue or fight. It is also not bullying when a student is teased in a friendly and playful way.” The HBSC then asks the students “How often have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months in the ways listed below?” with options “I was called mean names, was made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way”, “Other students left me out of things on purpose, excluded me from their group of friends, or completely ignored me”, “ I was hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors,” “Other students told lies or spread false rumors about me and tried to make others dislike me,” “I was bullied with mean names and comments about my race or color” “I was bullied with mean names and comments about my religion”, “other students made sexual jokes, comments, or gestures to me”, “I was bullied using a computer or mail messages or pictures”, “I was bullied using a cell phone” ,“I was bullied outside of school using a computer or e-mail messages or pictures” and “I was bullied outside of school using a cell phone.”

The student can respond “I have not been bullied in this way in the past couple of months”, “only once or twice”, “2 or 3 times”, “about once a week”, or “several times a week.” I dichotomized each type of bullying to equal 1 (yes) if the student reported experiencing that type of bullying at least once. Youth were categorized as either nonvictims (i.e., not a victim of any type of bullying), biased bullying victims (i.e., experienced any bullying involving bias, which included

mean names and comments about race or color, religion, or sexual jokes, comments, or gestures) and nonbiased bullying victims (experienced only bullying that was not related to bias or did not specify that the bullying involved bias).

### *Independent Variable*

Bullying perpetration is measured in the HBSC study identically to how bullying victimization is measured, except the question asks whether the student engaged in the behavior themselves (rather than experienced it as a victim). The survey again first asks the students how often they have taken part in any of the aforementioned specific behaviors with the question: “How often have you bullied another student(s) at school in the past couple of months in the ways listed below?” followed by “I called another student(s) mean names, made fun of them, or teased him or her in a hurtful way”; “I kept another student(s) out of things on purpose, excluded him or her from my group of friends, or completely ignored him or her”, etc. Response options are identical to the victimization measure.

Just as with victimization, I dichotomized the perpetration bullying measure such that 1= at least once and 0 is never. In the same way as victimization, youth were categorized as either non-perpetrators (i.e., did not perpetrate any type of bullying), biased bullying perpetrators (i.e., perpetrated any bullying involving bias, which included mean names and comments about race or color, religion, or sexual jokes/comments/gestures) and nonbiased bullying perpetrators (perpetrated only bullying that was not related to bias or did not specify that the bullying involved bias). Biased bullying perpetration included affirmative responses to the following: “I bullied another student(s) with mean names and comments about his or her race or color”; “I bullied another student(s) with mean names or comments about his or her religion”; “I made sexual jokes, comments, or gestures to another student(s).”



### *Control Variables: Background Characteristics*

Background characteristics were included in the analyses to account for the potential risk factors of biased victimization aside from bullying perpetration. These variables were self-reported gender (48% female), age 10-17,  $M=13.9$ ), and race/ethnicity (self-reported, categorized as Non-Hispanic White, Non-Hispanic Black, two or more, hereafter “two plus” racial/ethnic identities, Asian, and other race/ethnicity). The majority of students in the sample were Non-Hispanic White (hereafter, White; 54%), followed by Non-Hispanic Black (hereafter, Black; 15%), Hispanic (14%), two plus race/ethnicities (7%), other race/ethnicity (7%) and Asian (4%). Community type was classified as rural (28%), urban (25%), suburban (43%), unclassified (3%). Nativity was included using the indicator “were you born in the United States?” of which 8% of students responded “no” and were categorized as not being born in the U.S.

The analyses also included a proxy measure of severe financial hardship: unmet material need in the home, measured with the following question “some people go to bed or school hungry because there is not enough food at home. How often does this happen to you?”. This variable was coded as =1 if the student responded “always,” “often,” or “sometimes” (26% of the sample), as opposed to “never.” Whether the student perceives themselves to be under or over weight is also included as a covariate because students might bully each other because of their weight (or, alternatively, self-perceived weight might serve as a proxy for self-esteem, which could also put youth at risk of bullying victimization). This variable was measured using the indicator: “At present are you on a diet or doing something else to lose weight?.” The responses “No, but I should lose some weight”, “No, because I need to put on weight” and “yes” are coded as “I am under/over weight” (=1; 51% of the sample) whereas “No, my weight is fine” is coded as not perceiving oneself to be under or over weight (=0).

Finally, measures of parental monitoring were included because prior research indicates that low parental supervision is associated with increased risk of adolescent victimization and perpetration (Atik & Güneri, 2013). Maternal monitoring was measured by the indicator, “how much does your mother (or female guardian) know where you are after school” on a scale of 1-4, with 1 being “she knows a lot” and 4 being “don’t see or have a mother/female guardian”; hereafter “Mom not know whereabouts.” An identical measure was used for father/male guardian (Hereafter, “Dad not know whereabouts”). The mean lack of mother knowledge of whereabouts was 1.31 and fathers lack of knowledge of whereabouts was 1.89.

*Control Variables: Lifestyle/Delinquency Measures*

Indicators of students’ lifestyle and delinquent involvement were also included to account for the risk factors for victimization as specified by the routine activities theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979). These variables also provide an indication as to whether the risk factors for nonbiased victimization are associated with biased victimization as well. These measures included time spent with friends during the day and at night, measured as: “how many days a week do you usually spend time with friends right after school?”(M=2.76) and “how many evenings per week do you usually spend out with friends?” (M=2.25) with response options for both ranging from 0 days to 6 days. The remaining lifestyle/delinquency measures were coded as ever/never (ever= at least once) and included weapon carrying (“During the past 30 days, on how many days did you carry a weapon, such as a gun, knife, or club?”; ever=1 or more days; 15%), fighting (“During the past 12 months, how many times were you in a physical fight?”; 1=1 or more, 33%), smoking cigarettes and drinking (“On how many occasions (if any) have you done the following things in the past 30 days?”; smoked cigarettes once or more =1, 13% and been drunk once or more =1, 15%). Friends’ delinquency measures were also dichotomized (1=a few friends, most friends, or all friends, 0=no

friends) based on the number of friends the respondent estimates smoke cigarettes, (40%), drink alcohol (54%), and carry a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club (24%). Finally, I included a dislike school scale, measured on a scale of 1 to 4, asking the students how, at present, they feel about school (1=I like it a lot, 4=I don't like it at all). The dislike school scale served as a proxy for school attachment.

### **Analytic strategy**

First, I examined the prevalence of biased and nonbiased bullying perpetration and victimization in the sample (see Table 7-1). To assess whether there is evidence of specificity in the victim-offender overlap for biased bullying, I first descriptively examined the percentage of nonvictims, biased victims, and nonbiased victims who did not perpetrate bullying, who perpetrated any biased bullying, and who perpetrated only nonbiased bullying (see Table 7-2). I then estimated multivariable, multinomial logistic regression models predicting victimization types (biased, nonbiased, none) by perpetration types (biased, nonbiased, none) accounting for the background characteristics and lifestyle/delinquency variables. Specifically, I estimated the odds of being a (1) biased bullying victim relative to a nonvictim, (2) nonbiased bullying victim relative to a nonvictim, and a (3) biased bullying victim relative to a nonbiased bullying victim (see Table 7-3). The focal independent variable in each of these models was type of bullying perpetration (biased, nonbiased, none). All models account for background characteristics and lifestyle/delinquency variables (see Tables 7-A1 through 7-A3 for models that introduce perpetration without controls, then introduce background variables, followed by the lifestyle/delinquency variables).

From these models, I calculated predicted probabilities of experiencing any biased victimization, nonbiased victimization only, and no victimization across the perpetration types. I reported these probabilities for the full sample as well as for hypothetical ideal types, or particular

combinations of traits (Table 7-4) to determine for whom the specific victim-offender overlap for biased bullying is most prominent. Finally, I conducted supplementary analyses to assess whether there is further specificity by bias types. That is, I re-estimated the multinomial logistic regression models among only bully-victims and predicted odds of experiencing bullying victimization bias types (sexually biased victimization, nonsexually biased victimization, nonbiased victimization) by perpetration bias types (sexually biased bullying, nonsexually biased bullying, nonbiased bullying) (see Table 7-A4). I again used predicted probabilities to assess which students are most likely to experience victimization bias types (see Table 7-A5). All analyses are adjusted for imputation and the complex survey design using the MI and SVY commands in STATA 17.

## **Results**

### ***Prevalence of Biased and Nonbiased Bullying Victimization and Perpetration***

Table 7-1 contains the weighted, summary statistics for the analytic sample ( $N=8,739$ ).

Experiencing any biased bullying victimization in the past couple of months was reported by 27% of the sample, and experiencing nonbiased bullying victimization only in the past couple of months was reported by 24% of the sample (49% did not experience any bullying victimization in the past couple of months). Of the youth who experienced biased bullying victimization, 81% experienced sexually biased bullying, 41% experienced racially biased bullying, and 28% reported that the bullying was based on bias against religion (not mutually exclusive). Relative to biased bullying victimization, a smaller percentage of students perpetrated biased bullying (13%). Perpetrating nonbiased bullying only was reported by 27% of students. Regarding the prevalence of bias types for biased bullying perpetration, 76% of biased bullying perpetrators reported that the bullying involved sexual bias, 53% reported racial bias and 39% reported bias based on religion (not mutually exclusive).

### ***Bullying Perpetration by Bullying Victimization***

Presented in Table 7-2 is the distribution of the study variables – including bullying perpetration as well as the background and lifestyle variables – across the bullying victimization groups. About 7% of students in the no victimization and nonbiased victimization groups, respectively, perpetrated biased bullying, whereas 31% of youth who experienced biased victimization also reported perpetrating biased bullying. This finding suggests that biased perpetration is more common among biased bullying victims than it is among nonbiased bullying victims and nonvictims, providing initial support for the hypothesis of a type-specific victim-offender overlap for biased bullying. On the other hand, a similar percentage of students in the biased and nonbiased victimization groups perpetrated nonbiased bullying (35% and 36%, respectively). This result indicates that, although biased perpetration is more common among biased victims, nonbiased perpetration is not more common among nonbiased victims.

Turning to background characteristics, differences emerged across the victimization groups. For instance, the biased bullying victim category contained a higher percentage of females (56%) than did the nonbiased (52%) and nonvictim category (41%). Having gone to school or bed hungry was more common among youth in the biased victimization (35%) than the nonbiased victimization (26%) and no victimization (19%) categories. Perceiving oneself to be under or overweight was more prevalent among biased bullying victims (60%) than nonbiased bullying victims (51%) and non-victims (45%). Even so, other characteristics were quite similar across victimization groups. For instance, the percentage of Black and Hispanic youth in each victim category was similar. Regarding the delinquency/risky lifestyle variables, some notable differences across victim categories were observed, particularly for delinquency. 22% of biased bullying victims reported carrying a weapon, whereas only 12% of nonvictims and nonbiased bullying

victims each reported carrying a weapon. In addition, 44% of biased victims had been in a school fight, in comparison to 33% of nonbiased victims and 28% of nonvictims.

### ***Risk of Biased Bullying Victimization Relative to No Victimization***

Table 7-3 presents the results of the multinomial logistic regression models predicting risk of biased and nonbiased victimization. As shown in the first column, biased perpetration (vs no perpetration) was positively associated with the risk of biased bullying victimization (vs no victimization) by a factor of 10.37 (95% CI=[8.20, 13.12]). Nonbiased bullying perpetration (vs no perpetration) was also positively associated with being a biased bullying victimization, though the association was smaller in magnitude (RRR=4.06; 95% CI=[3.42, 4.83]). These results suggest that there is a link between biased perpetration and biased victimization that is stronger than the link between nonbiased perpetration and biased victimization, as indicated by the non-overlapping confidence intervals for the perpetration estimates (Table 7-3).

Regarding the background characteristics, being female, not born in the U.S., going to school or bed hungry, and perceiving oneself as under or overweight were associated with increased risk of being a biased bullying victim relative to being a nonvictim, with the largest effect size for female gender (RRR=2.61; 95% CI=[2.22, 3.08]). Black and Hispanic youth had lower risk than White youth of being biased bullying victims, as did older youth. For the lifestyle/delinquency variables, having been in a school fight, carried a weapon, and having friends who smoke cigarettes were all positively associated with increased risk of biased victimization versus no victimization, whereas spending time with friends after school was associated with decreased risk (see Table 7-3).

### ***Risk of Nonbiased Bullying Victimization Relative to No Victimization***

The second column in Table 7-3 presents the risk of nonbiased bullying victimization in comparison to no victimization. Nonbiased perpetration (vs no perpetration) was associated with a

2.65 factor increase in the risk of being a nonbiased bullying victim relative to being a nonvictim (95% CI=[2.20, 3.20]). Biased bullying perpetration (vs no perpetration) was associated with a 1.66 factor increase in the risk of being a nonbiased victim relative to a nonvictim (95% CI=[1.26, 2.19]). The nearly overlapping confidence intervals for the estimates of the associations that biased and nonbiased perpetration have with nonbiased victimization suggest that biased and nonbiased perpetration predict nonbiased victimization similarly to each other. In other words, the connection between nonbiased victimization and perpetration is not as strong as the connection between biased victimization and perpetration.

Regarding the background characteristics, being female (vs male) was associated with increased risk of nonbiased bullying victimization relative to no victimization (RRR=1.65, 95% CI=[1.45, 1.89]), as was going to bed/school hungry and dad not knowing whereabouts. Older age was negatively associated with nonbiased victimization, as was being of Hispanic and Asian ethnicity (relative to White). Spending nights with friends was negatively associated with nonbiased bullying victimization. Of the lifestyle/delinquency variables, only been in a school fight was positively associated with nonbiased victimization.

### ***Risk of Biased Bullying Victimization Relative to Nonbiased Bullying Victimization***

The third column in Table 7-3 presents the estimates for the risk of biased bullying victimization relative to nonbiased bullying victimization. Biased perpetration (vs no perpetration) was positively associated with experiencing biased victimization (vs nonbiased victimization) by a factor of 6.24 (95% CI=[4.79, 8.13]). Nonbiased perpetration (vs no perpetration) was also positively associated with experiencing biased victimization (vs nonbiased perpetration), by a factor of 1.53 (95% CI=1.25, 1.88)]. As with the model comparing biased victimization to no victimization, the magnitude of the association between biased perpetration and biased victimization was greater than

the association between nonbiased perpetration and biased victimization (as indicated by the non-overlapping confidence intervals for the associations between the two perpetration variables and victimization). Thus, in a direct comparison between the risk of biased and nonbiased victimization, there is evidence to suggest that biased perpetration is a stronger predictor than is nonbiased perpetration.

Turning to background characteristics, being female, not born in the U.S., going to bed/school hungry, and perceiving oneself as under- or over- weight were also positively associated with being a biased victim relative to being a nonbiased victim. Of the lifestyle/delinquency variables, only friends smoking cigarettes had a positive association with biased versus nonbiased victimization.

#### ***Probability of Victimization by Perpetration across Hypothetical Ideal Types***

The results thus far have indicated that, relative to no perpetration, both biased and nonbiased perpetration are associated with all forms of victimization, and biased perpetration is especially predictive of biased victimization. These results are suggestive of a specific victim-offender overlap for biased bullying, as hypothesized. Next, I calculated the predicted probabilities of victimization type by perpetration type for the full sample and for particular traits (i.e., traits that were significant in the multivariable analyses) to assess for whom this biased bullying victim-offender overlap is most prominent.

Panel A of Table 7-4 presents the predicted probabilities (derived from Table 7-3) for the full sample. As shown in the left-most column, about 14% of youth who had not perpetrated bullying experienced biased bullying victimization, whereas approximately 60% of youth who perpetrated biased bullying were victimized by biased bullying. Of youth who perpetrated nonbiased bullying, 32% experienced biased bullying victimization.



I then examined these probabilities for subsets of the sample, or ideal types. For males, 10% of youth who had not perpetrated bullying experienced biased victimization, 51% of youth who perpetrated biased bullying were victimized by biased bullying, and 25% of youth who perpetrated nonbiased bullying were victimized by biased bullying. For females, approximately 21% of youth who did not perpetrate bullying experienced biased victimization, 69% of youth who perpetrated biased bullying were victimized by biased bullying, and 41% of youth who perpetrated nonbiased bullying were victimized by biased bullying. For females who have gone to bed/school hungry, 75% of biased perpetrators have been victimized by biased bullying, (61% for males who have gone to bed/school hungry). Finally, for females who were not born in the U.S., 77% of biased perpetrators experience biased victimization. On the whole, these analyses reveal that this perpetration-victimization overlap for biased bullying is highest among females whose families face severe financial hardship and females who were not born in the U.S.

### ***Supplementary Analyses: Bias Types***

In supplementary analyses, I assessed whether there is evidence of any connection between the bias types among bully-victims. To do so, I followed a similar procedure to the main analysis. Specifically, I examined whether sexually biased perpetration is related to sexually biased victimization and compared this association to those between sexually biased and *non*-sexually biased (i.e., bias based on race or religion) victimization and perpetration. This portion of the analysis assesses the subsample of youth who were bully-victims (i.e., youth who either did not perpetrate bullying or were not victimized by bullying were excluded), which allowed me to assess how sexually biased, non-sexually biased, and nonbiased perpetration relate to sexually biased, non-sexually biased, and nonbiased victimization. I expected that, just as some norms and

situational influences on bullying may be promotive of biased bullying differently from nonbiased bullying, norms could condone certain types of biased bullying over others.

The first column of Table 7-5 shows that, relative to nonbiased bullying perpetration, sexually biased perpetration is positively associated with sexually biased victimization (versus nonbiased victimization, RRR=6.65; 95% CI=[4.84, 9.14]). The magnitude of this association is greater than that between non-sexually biased perpetration and sexually biased perpetration, indicating evidence of bias-type specificity (RRR=2.87; 95% CI=[1.90, 4.34]). The second model (middle column) shows that sexually biased perpetration and non-sexually biased perpetration are associated with non-sexually biased victimization at similar rates as each other (i.e., RRR=1.79 and 2.09, respectively, CIs overlap). The third column indicates that sexually biased bullying perpetration is associated with increased odds of sexually biased victimization (vs nonsexual biased victimization) by a factor of 3.71, (95% CI=[2.32, 5.94]). On the other hand, non-sexually biased perpetration (vs no perpetration) was not associated with sexually biased victimization in comparison to non-sexually biased victimization, indicating fairly strong evidence of a connection between bias types among victim-bullies. Similar to the main analyses, predicted probabilities (see Table 7-6) indicated that this overlap of perpetration and victimization within bias types was also most prominent among females who were not born in the United States. Overall, the supplementary models suggest that sexual perpetration and victimization have a stronger connection with each other than do nonsexual perpetration and victimization.

## **Discussion**

It is evident from the expansive body of bully research that a subset of students are both victims and perpetrators, or bully-victims. However, past research on bully-victims has seldom examined whether students bully each other in ways that reflect their victimization experiences. One

especially important gap within this topic pertains to whether students who perpetrate bullying related to bias also experience victimization related to bias. This study examined the overlap between bullying victimization and perpetration in a national sample of youth and assessed whether there is evidence of a type-specific overlap for biased bullying, such that victims of biased bullying are also likely to perpetrate biased bullying. I then compared this type-specific overlap to the overlap between biased and *nonbiased* bullying and determined the characteristics of students who are most likely to be biased bully-victims. Based on the social learning (Sutherland, 1947; Akers 1996) and situational peer influence perspectives (Weerman et al., 2018), I hypothesized that particular situations or social settings would be especially conducive to biased bullying, leading to a victim-offender overlap for biased bullying.

The results were overall consistent with this expectation. Youth who perpetrated biased bullying had a high likelihood of experiencing biased victimization, and this association was stronger than the associations between biased and nonbiased bullying victimization and perpetration. Although the temporal ordering of the victimization and perpetration is unknown, the analyses indicated that youth who bully each other in a prejudicial way are often also victimized by prejudicial bullying. This overlap is consistent with prior work which finds that certain types of bullying are likely to cluster within victim-bullies (Stubbs-Richardson & May, 2021; Hatchel et al. 2020) and with theoretical explanations for youth aggression that emphasize group norms, social learning, and the situational influences of peers (Sutherland, 1947, Weerman et al., 2018).

Bullying takes place within a wider social context and is affected by the norms, reactions, and behaviors of others (Dillon & Lochman, 2019; Simon & Nail, 2013). It is therefore likely that peer attitudes and youths' perceptions of group norms endorsing biased bullying encourage the behavior and lead to situations or contexts that have a high risk of both biased victimization and biased

offending. Students may observe the instantaneous social rewards of biased bullying and victimize others in a similar way in an attempt to capture the esteem of peers. This interpretation is in line with work in the hate crime and school victimization literatures, which suggest that both biased aggression (Levin & Reichelmann, 2015) and peer victimization at school (Faris and Felmlee (2014) are perpetrated to gain status. In further support of this interpretation, Merrin et al. (2018) found that friendship selection in their network of youth was based on homophobic name-calling, such that youth befriended peers who had similar rates of homophobic name-calling (this was not true for general bullying behavior). Notably, however, like other explanations for aggression that are based on group norms and a culture of antisocial behavior (e.g., Anderson, 1999), it is important to bear in mind that values need not be internalized by individual youths for them to influence behavior (Swartz et al., 2017).

It is also possible that, particularly if the bullying victimization occurred before the perpetration, this overlap is due to retaliation or revenge, which scholars have suggested is an overlooked component of bullying (Frey et al., 2015). That is, students may victimize the same youth who bullied them in a similar way as a form of payback or reactive aggression. Although this study could not test whether there was such retaliation in our sample (such an analysis would require sociocentric data that identifies particular individuals), it would be fruitful for future studies to pursue this line of research, particularly given that retaliation tends to escalate conflict and transmit aggression (McAuliffe et al., 2007). Relatedly, Galan et al. (2021) suggest that the trauma resulting from biased victimization may lead to externalizing behavior such as violence or bullying others, and highlight how “perceived stigma, minority stress, and systemic disempowerment” factors into interactions with peers (Galan et al., 2021: P. 8).

Extending prior research, I also examined among whom this biased bullying victim-offender overlap is most prominent. Against expectations— which supposed that males would be most likely to be victim-offenders of biased bullying – I found that a higher percentage of females were victim-perpetrators than males. Specifically, 69% of females who perpetrated biased bullying were also victims of biased bullying (vs 51% of males). This finding is inconsistent with work on biased bullying, which finds that males are more likely than females to perpetrate (Ozdemir et al., 2019). It is possible that the rates of biased victimization – and perpetration – were higher for females than is typical of other studies because sexually biased bullying was so common in this sample. In other words, other research may have had lower rates of biased victimization of females because racial and ethnic victimization was relatively higher in those studies, which targets males more than females. Moreover, sexually biased bullying, as measured in the HBSC, may have captured a variety of behaviors under the umbrella of sexual harassment, whereas other research may have had lower rates of sexually biased bullying because they measured gender-based bullying in a stricter manner. Sexually-biased bullying might have also been so common in these data because it might have encompassed both gender and sexual orientation biases, which other studies typically ask about separately.

Among females whose families have severe financial difficulties or whose families were not born in the U.S., more than *three quarters* of biased perpetrators were victimized by biased bullying. Prior research supports the notion that immigrant (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017) and low socioeconomic status (Tippet & Wolke, 2014) youth are likely to be victimized by bullying at school. Indeed, Ellonen et al (2021) found that immigrant background was the strongest predictor of hate crime victimization among Finnish adolescents. Even so, research has not established that either of these groups are especially likely to be *victim-bullies*, let alone for biased bullying

specifically. It is possible that, for immigrant youth, students who are victimized by biased bullying attempt to assimilate through copying the types of behaviors that they are subjected to. Low socioeconomic status and immigrant youth might also perpetrate biased bullying defensively, or in response to perceiving status threat, consistent with the second-most common type of hate crime offender in the hate crime typology (McDevitt et al. 2002). Still a third possibility is that immigrant and low SES youth live in communities and attend schools that are more conducive to biased aggression due to disorder, discipline, or low social cohesion, which might elevate their risk of both offending and victimization.

This analysis also revealed the risk factors of biased victimization after accounting for perpetration. Being female, not born in the U.S., going to school/bed hungry, perceiving oneself as under- or over- weight, and having friends smoking cigarettes were all positively associated with being a biased victim (relative to being a nonbiased victim) in the multivariable models. As mentioned above, that low SES and immigrant status were risk factors for biased bullying victimization aligns with prior work on bullying and hate crime. Similarly, it is likely that friends smoking cigarettes is a proxy for low SES peer groups. Perceiving oneself as under- or over- weight is also not surprising given research which finds that weight is associated with bullying (Van Geel et al., 2014) and that being bullied is associated with weight misperceptions (Lee et al., 2018).

On the other hand, many lifestyle/delinquent risk factors, while associated with biased victimization at the bivariate level (i.e., common among biased victims), did not distinguish *biased from nonbiased* victims. In other words, delinquency and risky lifestyles are common among both biased and nonbiased victims. These results are generally consistent with the findings in Ellonen et

al. (2021), who found that delinquency, substance abuse, and risky routine activities did not have an independent effect on adolescent hate crime victimization.

Non-White racial and ethnic identity was not associated with elevated risk of biased bullying victimization in these data. This finding was unexpected, given prior research that finds racial and ethnic minority youth are disproportionately likely to be victims of general and biased bullying (Utley et al., 2022; Bucchianeri et al., 2016). Like the findings for gender, this result might be due to sexually biased bullying being so common in these data (more common than racial and ethnic bullying). Yet, it is important to note that the bias types did overlap considerably with each other, such that many students reported experiencing bullying involving sexual comments as well as related to their race/color.

Related to bias types, the supplementary analyses revealed that, within bully-victims of biased bullying, sexually-biased perpetration and victimization were associated with each other. Thus, it appears that, in addition to biased victimization clustering within students, *types of* biased victimization also cluster within students. This finding provides additional evidence to suggest that norms, culture, and settings conducive to specific types of bullying may lead to perpetration and victimization of that behavior by students.

### ***Implications***

This study has important implications for research and policy concerned with biased bullying among adolescents. First, that biased bullying victimization and perpetration cluster within students – meaning that experiencing one increases the likelihood of experiencing the other – implies that intervention efforts aimed at reducing biased aggression should target groups norms and the contagion of bullying within schools and particular peer groups. In other words, initiatives should follow the socio-ecological or “whole school” aggression intervention approach and acknowledge

that bullying results from processes at various levels (Kärnä, et al., 2011). Moreover, research demonstrates that bystander and peer interventions can be effective for curbing bullying behavior in schools (Hawkins et al., 2001), and evidence suggests that youth overestimate the extent to which their peers approve of bullying (Dillon & Lochman, 2019). Programs focusing on changing the school climate and norms around around prejudicial bullying and misperceptions of each peer approval of prejudicial bullying therefore ought to prove efficacious for reducing both victimization and offending (Waasdorp et al., 2011)

However, it also appears that nonbiased and biased cluster together, as nonbiased perpetration was positively associated with biased perpetration (though much less strongly than the association between biased victimization and perpetration). Accordingly, the analyses suggest that many youth involved in biased bullying are also involved in nonbiased bullying. Thus, while programming needs to be directed at biased and prejudicial norms, effective existing anti-bullying programming may also reach biased victim-bullies. Moreover, child-serving professionals should bear in mind that immigrant and low-SES girls have the highest risk of being victim-bullies of prejudicial aggression and should therefore be targeted in intervention efforts.

### ***Limitations***

These findings should be considered in light of the study limitations. First, these data are cross-sectional, and the time ordering of victimization, perpetration, and lifestyle variables cannot be discerned. Thus, it is unclear whether the victimization or perpetration occurred first, or whether lifestyle activities evolved in response to a bullying experience. Accordingly, the causal direction of this association is unclear. However, as the goal of this study was not to test explanations for the victim-perpetrator overlap but, rather, to test for the presence of a type-specific overlap for biased bullying in a nationally representative sample, this limitation does not critically impact the study



conclusions. Future research should utilize longitudinal data and examined whether biased perpetrators and likely to become future victims, or, conversely, whether biased victims are likely to become perpetrators at a later date.

Second, the HBSC survey asked students about biased bullying victimization and perpetration related to race/color, religion, and sexuality. Other types of biased bullying – such as that related to (dis)ability—were not be captured in these data and might not display the overlap of victims and perpetrators observed in this study. Moreover, this study did not assess biased victimization (or perpetration) for single versus multiple biases. It could be the case, for example, that victims who experienced more than one type of biased victimization were more likely to become biased perpetrators than victims who experienced one type of biased victimization. In addition, I was unable to tease out the role of intersectionality or examine the overlap for students who hold multiple minoritized identities in comparison to students who hold one (or no) minoritized identity. Intersectionality and minority stress theory (Meyer, 2010) would suggest that these students experience unique stressors and may be especially likely to exhibit behaviors associated with negative outcomes, such as being a victim-perpetrators of biased bullying. Third, these incidents were all self-reported by students and not confirmed by an independent source. Thus, some types of biased victimization could have been underreported or overreported due to students misperceiving the situation or due to the stigma associated with victimization and discrimination. Relatedly, biased perpetration is likely underreported by students who feel shame about the act or who are unaware of how their actions are perceived by others.

## **Conclusion**

This study provides a unique contribution to the literatures on adolescent bullying and biased victimization by examining a potential type-specific, victim-offender overlap for biased bullying.

Results revealed that the perpetrators of biased bullying were also likely to be victims of biased bullying, and that this association was stronger than those between biased and nonbiased victimization and perpetration. These findings imply that prevention and intervention efforts should target group norms regarding social acceptance of biased bullying, suggesting that some social contexts may be conducive to biased bullying. The biased bullying victim-offender overlap was most prominent among females of immigrant and low SES background, highlighting the need to focus on reducing prejudicial behavior among this subset of high-risk youth.

## CHAPTER 7 PART A – TABLES

**Table 7-1:** Weighted, descriptive statistics for analytic sample, HBSC 2009-2010 (*N*=8,739)

	Percent	Mean (SE)
<b>Bullying Victimization</b>		
No victimization	49	
Any biased	27	
Nonbiased only	24	
<b>Bullying Perpetration</b>		
No perpetration	60	
Any biased	13	
Nonbiased only	27	
<b>Victimization Bias types (if any biased bullying victimization; not mutually exclusive)</b>		
Sexually biased	81	
Racially biased	41	
Religion-based bias	28	
<b>Perpetration Bias types (if any biased bullying perpetration; not mutually exclusive)</b>		
Sexually biased	76	
Racially biased	53	
Religion-based bias	39	
<b>Background Characteristics</b>		
Mother's lack of knowledge of whereabouts after school (1-4)		1.31 (0.64)
Father's lack of knowledge of whereabouts after school (1-4)		1.89 (1.03)
Age (10-17)		13.90 (1.28)
Not born in the U.S.	8	
Go to bed/school hungry (1=ever; 0=never)	26	
I am under/over weight	51	
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
White	54	
Black	15	
Hispanic	14	
Two plus ethnicities	7	
Asian	4	
Other race/ethnicity	7	
Female	48	
<b>Community type</b>		
Unclassified	3	
Urban	25	
Suburban	43	

Table 7-1: Weighted, descriptive statistics for analytic sample, HBSC 2009-2010 (N=8,739) (Continued)

Rural	28	
Lifestyle/Delinquency Variables		
Days with friends (number/week)		2.76 (2.01)
Nights with friends (number/ week)		2.25 (2.06)
Been in a school fight	33	
Smoke cigarettes	13	
Been drunk	15	
Carried a weapon	15	
Friends smoke cigarettes	40	
Friends drink alcohol	54	
Friends carry weapons	24	
Don't like school scale (1-4)		2.09 (0.87)

*Note:* Estimates weighted to adjust for the complex survey design; 20 imputed datasets.

**Table 7-2: Bullying victimization by study variables, HBSC 2009-2010 (N=8,739)**

	No Victimization		Any Biased Victimization		Nonbiased Victimization Only	
	<i>N</i> =4,277		<i>N</i> =2,408		<i>N</i> =2,189	
	Mean	Percent	Mean	Percent	Mean	Percent
<b>Bullying Perpetration</b>						
No perpetration		75		34		57
Any biased perpetration		7		31		7
Only nonbiased perpetration		18		35		36
<b>Background Characteristics</b>						
Male		59		44		48
Female		41		56		52
White		52		54		56
Black		16		14		14
Hispanic		15		13		14
Two plus ethnicities		6		9		7
Asian		4		4		3
Other race/ethnicity		7		6		5
Age	14.02 (.07)		13.96 (.05)		13.75 (.06)	
Unclassified region		3		4		4
Urban		26		23		26
Suburban		44		44		42
Rural		27		29		29
Not born in the U.S.		8		10		7
Go to bed/school hungry		19		35		26
I am under/over weight		45		60		51
Mom not know whereabouts	1.26 (.01)		1.40 (.02)		1.28 (.02)	
Dad not know whereabouts	1.77 (.03)		2.00 (.04)		1.88 (.04)	
<b>Lifestyle/Delinquency Variables</b>						
Days with friends (/week)	2.86 (.05)		2.64 (.06)		2.66 (.06)	
Nights with friends (/week)	2.33 (.06)		2.29 (.06)		2.05 (.07)	
Been in a school fight		28		44		33
Smoke cigarettes		11		19		10
Been drunk		12		22		12
Carried a weapon		12		22		12
Friends smoke cigarettes		35		52		37
Friends drink alcohol		51		63		51
Friends carry weapons		20		33		21
Don't like school	2.02 (.02)		2.19 (.03)		2.06 (.02)	

*Note:* Estimates weighted to adjust for the complex survey design; 20 imputed datasets.

**Table 7-3: RRRs and 95% CIs for multinomial logistic regressions predicting bullying victimization (N=8,739)**

	Biased (vs no victimization)		Nonbiased (vs no victimization)		Biased (vs nonbiased)	
	RRR	95% CI	RRR	95% CI	RRR	95% CI
<b>Bullying Perpetration (ref=none)</b>						
Biased	10.37***	[8.20, 13.12]	1.66**	[1.26, 2.19]	6.24***	[4.79, 8.13]
Nonbiased	4.06***	[3.42, 4.83]	2.65***	[2.20, 3.20]	1.53***	[1.25, 1.88]
<b>Background characteristics</b>						
Female	2.61***	[2.22, 3.08]	1.65***	[1.45, 1.89]	1.58***	[1.34, 1.87]
Black (ref=White)	0.74*	[0.57, 0.97]	0.85	[0.68, 1.08]	0.87	[0.70, 1.07]
Hispanic	0.69*	[0.51, 0.95]	0.81*	[0.68, 0.97]	0.85	[0.64, 1.14]
Two plus race/ethnicities	1.22	[0.86, 1.72]	0.97	[0.68, 1.39]	1.25	[0.97, 1.61]
Asian	0.71	[0.41, 1.22]	0.56***	[0.42, 0.77]	1.25	[0.77, 2.05]
Other race/ethnicity	0.76	[0.54, 1.08]	0.68*	[0.47, 0.99]	1.12	[0.80, 1.57]
Age	0.90**	[0.83, 0.96]	0.86***	[0.80, 0.92]	1.04	[0.96, 1.14]
Unclassified (ref=suburban)	1.20	[0.78, 1.85]	1.07	[0.72, 1.59]	1.13	[0.92, 1.38]
Urban	0.99	[0.80, 1.23]	1.08	[0.90, 1.30]	0.92	[0.71, 1.18]
Rural	1.04	[0.85, 1.28]	1.07	[0.86, 1.34]	0.97	[0.79, 1.20]
Not born in the U.S.	1.66**	[1.20, 2.28]	1.10	[0.86, 1.41]	1.50**	[1.13, 2.00]
Go to bed/school hungry	1.76***	[1.43, 2.17]	1.39**	[1.12, 1.70]	1.27**	[1.07, 1.52]
I am under/over weight	1.53***	[1.32, 1.79]	1.21*	[1.05, 1.39]	1.27**	[1.09, 1.48]
Mom not know whereabouts	1.05	[0.95, 1.16]	1.01	[0.91, 1.13]	1.04	[0.93, 1.15]
Dad not know whereabouts	1.07	[0.97, 1.18]	1.09*	[1.01, 1.18]	0.98	[0.90, 1.07]
<b>Lifestyle/Delinquency Variables</b>						
Days with friends	0.91***	[0.87, 0.96]	0.99	[0.94, 1.04]	0.92**	[0.88, 0.97]
Nights with friends	0.98	[0.93, 1.03]	0.93**	[0.89, 0.98]	1.05	[0.99, 1.11]
Been in school fight	1.58***	[1.28, 1.97]	1.32**	[1.08, 1.61]	1.20	[0.99, 1.46]
Smoke cigarettes	0.86	[0.63, 1.18]	0.84	[0.64, 1.09]	1.03	[0.78, 1.38]
Been drunk	1.10	[0.88, 1.39]	0.96	[0.76, 1.22]	1.15	[0.88, 1.50]
Carried a weapon	1.29*	[1.01, 1.65]	1.05	[0.76, 1.46]	1.23	[0.92, 1.64]
Friends smoke cigarettes	1.42***	[1.18, 1.71]	1.06	[0.89, 1.26]	1.35*	[1.04, 1.75]
Friends drink	0.88	[0.70, 1.11]	0.93	[0.78, 1.12]	0.94	[0.77, 1.16]
Friends carry weapons	1.15	[0.95, 1.40]	1.03	[0.84, 1.27]	1.12	[0.89, 1.42]
Don't like school	1.01	[0.90, 1.13]	1.00	[0.92, 1.09]	1.01	[0.91, 1.11]
Constant	0.41	[0.15, 1.16]	2.07	[0.83, 5.17]	0.20**	[0.07, 0.59]

*Notes:* RRR= relative risk ratio. In an alternative model with the perpetration reference category set to nonbiased perpetration, the RRR for biased perpetration is 2.55 (95% CI= 2.05, 3.17) for column 1, 0.62 (95% CI= 0.48, 0.82) for column 2, and 4.07 (95% CI 3.13, 5.30) for column 3.

Table 7-4. Predicted probabilities of bullying victimization by perpetration for full sample and ideal types

	Biased victimization	Nonbiased victimization	No victimization	Total
	%	%	%	%
Panel A: Full Sample ( <i>N</i> =8,872)				
No perpetration	14.45	22.96	62.59	100
Biased perpetration	59.80	15.22	24.98	100
Nonbiased perpetration	32.22	33.41	34.36	100
Panel B: Males ( <i>N</i> =4,583)				
No perpetration	10.19	20.14	69.67	100
Biased perpetration	50.62	16.02	33.36	100
Nonbiased perpetration	25.18	32.46	42.36	100
Panel C: Females ( <i>N</i> =4,289)				
No perpetration	20.55	25.67	53.78	100
Biased perpetration	68.85	13.78	17.37	100
Nonbiased perpetration	40.67	33.15	26.19	100
Panel E: Males who have gone to bed/school hungry ( <i>N</i> =1,184)				
No perpetration	14.06	23.15	62.79	100
Biased perpetration	59.02	15.57	25.41	100
Nonbiased perpetration	31.52	33.86	34.63	100
Panel D: Females who have gone to bed/school hungry ( <i>N</i> =1,115)				
No perpetration	26.66	27.76	45.58	100
Biased perpetration	75.10	12.52	12.38	100
Nonbiased perpetration	47.62	32.35	20.03	100
Panel F: Males who were not born in the U.S. ( <i>N</i> =400)				
No perpetration	15.01	20.40	64.59	100
Biased perpetration	61.26	13.33	25.41	100
Nonbiased perpetration	33.95	30.10	35.95	100

Table 7-4. Predicted probabilities of bullying victimization and perpetration for full sample and ideal types (Continued)

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Panel G: Females not born in the U.S.				
(N=369)				
No perpetration	28.52	24.51	46.97	100
Biased perpetration	77.14	10.62	12.25	100
Nonbiased perpetration	50.87	28.52	20.62	100

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*Note:* Predicted probabilities derived from multinomial logistic regression models accounting for covariates listed in Table 3 (covariates held at the mean).



Table 7-5: RRRs and 95% CIs for Multinomial logistic regressions predicting sexually biased bullying victimization (N=2,592)

	M1: Sexually Biased (vs nonbiased)		M2: Nonsexually biased (vs nonbiased)		M3: Sexually biased (vs Nonsexually biased)	
	M1: RRR	95% CI	M2: RRR	95% CI	M3: RRR	95% CI
Perpetration (ref=nonbiased)						
Sexually biased	6.65***	[4.84, 9.14]	1.79*	[1.10, 2.91]	3.71***	[2.32, 5.94]
Nonsexually biased	2.87***	[1.90, 4.34]	2.09*	[1.10, 3.97]	1.37	[0.79, 2.39]
Background characteristics						
Female	2.40***	[1.81, 3.18]	0.61*	[0.39, 0.98]	3.90***	[2.44, 6.22]
Black (ref=White)	0.81	[0.62, 1.05]	1.42	[0.75, 2.67]	0.57	[0.31, 1.06]
Hispanic	0.76	[0.55, 1.06]	1.74*	[1.05, 2.87]	0.44**	[0.25, 0.76]
Two plus race/ethnicities	1.27	[0.82, 1.96]	2.43**	[1.39, 4.27]	0.52*	[0.28, 0.98]
Asian	1.30	[0.75, 2.25]	1.79	[0.91, 3.51]	0.73	[0.42, 1.24]
Other race/ethnicity	1.07	[0.66, 1.76]	1.89	[0.94, 3.81]	0.57	[0.27, 1.18]
Age	1.06	[0.94, 1.21]	0.96	[0.83, 1.11]	1.11	[0.96, 1.29]
Unclassified (ref=suburban)	1.82**	[1.21, 2.75]	2.19*	[1.06, 4.53]	0.83	[0.52, 1.32]
Urban	0.92	[0.69, 1.24]	1.18	[0.70, 2.01]	0.78	[0.46, 1.32]
Rural	1.05	[0.77, 1.44]	1.38	[0.83, 2.30]	0.76	[0.48, 1.21]
Not born in the U.S.	1.68*	[1.02, 2.75]	1.94**	[1.19, 3.17]	0.87	[0.51, 1.48]
Go to bed/school hungry	1.10	[0.86, 1.41]	1.25	[0.85, 1.84]	0.88	[0.61, 1.27]
I am under/overweight	1.28*	[1.04, 1.57]	1.33	[0.90, 1.96]	0.96	[0.62, 1.49]
Mom not know whereabouts	1.03	[0.84, 1.24]	1.02	[0.78, 1.34]	1.00	[0.77, 1.30]
Dad not know whereabouts	0.96	[0.86, 1.08]	1.11	[0.90, 1.38]	0.87	[0.69, 1.09]
Lifestyle/Delinquency Variables						
Days with friends	0.91*	[0.84, 0.99]	0.86**	[0.78, 0.94]	1.06	[0.95, 1.18]

Table 7-5: RRRs and 95% CIs for Multinomial logistic regressions predicting sexually biased bullying victimization (N=2,592)  
(Continued)

Nights with friends	1.06	[0.98, 1.14]	1.05	[0.95, 1.17]	1.00	[0.91, 1.11]
Been in school fight	1.15	[0.88, 1.52]	1.17	[0.83, 1.66]	0.98	[0.67, 1.45]
Smoke cigarettes	1.01	[0.66, 1.55]	0.59	[0.34, 1.05]	1.70*	[1.02, 2.84]
Been drunk	1.06	[0.72, 1.56]	1.66*	[1.01, 2.75]	0.64*	[0.41, 0.98]
Carried a weapon	1.36	[0.99, 1.87]	1.16	[0.74, 1.84]	1.17	[0.76, 1.79]
Friends smoke cigarettes	1.48*	[1.01, 2.15]	1.78**	[1.18, 2.69]	0.83	[0.56, 1.22]
Friends drink	0.95	[0.70, 1.29]	0.69	[0.44, 1.09]	1.38	[0.85, 2.24]
Friends carry weapons	1.09	[0.79, 1.49]	1.05	[0.69, 1.59]	1.04	[0.73, 1.47]
Don't like school	1.10	[0.96, 1.27]	0.87	[0.70, 1.08]	1.27*	[1.00, 1.60]
Constant	0.12*	[0.02, 0.71]	0.31	[0.05, 2.09]	0.40	[0.05, 3.49]

Notes: RRR= relative risk ratio. In an alternative model with the perpetration reference category set to nonbiased perpetration, the RRR for sexually biased perpetration is 2.32 (95% CI= 1.43, 3.75) for Model 1, 0.86 (95% CI=.43, 1.70) for Model 2, and 2.70 (95% CI= 1.47, 4.97) for Model 3.

Table 7-6. Predicted probabilities of bullying victimization by perpetration: for full sample and ideal types

	Sexually biased victimization	Nonsexually biased victimization	Nonbiased victimization	Total
	%	%	%	%
Panel A: Full Sample (N=2,592)				
Nonbiased perpetration	40.15	11.25	48.60	100
Sexually biased perpetration	79.53	6.00	14.47	100
Nonsexually biased perpetration	61.51	12.55	25.95	100
Panel B: Females (N=1,255)				
Nonbiased perpetration	51.56	7.50	40.94	100
Sexually biased perpetration	86.32	3.38	10.30	100
Nonsexually biased perpetration	72.33	7.66	20.02	100
Panel C: Males (N=1,376)				
Nonbiased perpetration	28.82	16.33	54.84	100
Sexually biased perpetration	69.51	10.61	19.88	100
Nonsexually biased perpetration	48.17	19.88	31.95	100
Panel D: Females not born in the U.S. (N=117)				
Nonbiased perpetration	60.83	9.99	29.97	100
Sexually biased perpetration	89.33	3.99	6.69	100
Nonsexually biased perpetration	77.40	9.35	13.28	100
Panel E: Males not born in the U.S. (N=151)				
Nonbiased perpetration	35.35	22.86	41.79	100
Sexually biased perpetration	73.97	12.88	13.15	100
Nonsexually biased perpetration	53.11	25.00	21.89	100

Note: Observations (Ns) do not exactly total to full sample because totals were not obtained accounting for the complex survey design.

## **PART B: Biased and Nonbiased Bullying Perpetration: Is Bias Different?**

As demonstrated by the first chapter of this dissertation and by the literatures on school violence and hate crime, respectively, being victimized on the basis of one's actual or perceived characteristics can be immensely impactful. Yet, whereas the body of research on biased victimization has grown in recent years, less is known about the perpetrators of biased (versus nonbiased) aggression, particularly young perpetrators (for exceptions, see Caravita et al., 2020, Ozdemir et al., 2020). Why do children victimize each other in a discriminatory manner? Are the risk factors for biased bullying perpetration the same or different from general (i.e., nonbiased) bullying perpetration?

Explanations for bias-motivated aggression imply unique risk factors that should be associated with biased bullying perpetration more strongly than nonbiased perpetration. For instance, structured action theory (Messerschmidt, 1997) expects that males commit crime – especially crime that establishes dominance, such as biased crime – more often than females, and research findings have supported this expectation (Ozdemir et al. 2016; Ozdemir et al., 2020). McDevitt et al.'s (2002) hate crime offender typology and Perry's (2001) theory of “doing difference” each also expect that biased perpetration is driven by different factors than nonbiased perpetration (see also Iganski 2001). Specifically, victim and perpetrator characteristics (gender, race, ethnicity, etc.) are presumed to be more influential for these incidents than is typical of in general bullying incidents.

These scholars suggest that a primary driver of biased bullying involves perceived social status and identity, as well as influencing the position of that identity relative to others. For example, homophobic bullying demonstrates the perpetrator's commitment to heteronormativity and distinguishes their own identity from homosexuality (Pascoe, 2005), so the (actual or

perceived) sexual orientation of the victim – and perpetrator—should be a highly relevant risk factor for involvement in biased bullying. According to McDevitt et al. (2002), some hate crimes are committed defensively when the offender perceives that their status or position is jeopardized by the victim’s social group. The biased aggression is committed to reinforce the existing social hierarchy of power or resources (see also Perry, 2001). This type of offending fits within the larger framework of group and power threat theories, which propose that acts of social control occur when a group perceives that their position in society has been altered by another group (Blalock 1967; Blumer 1958; Tajfel 1982). Thus, in the case of defensive perpetration of biased aggression, the social or economic status of the perpetrator and of the victim would each be important for understanding risk. In short, theories of biased aggression imply that the personal characteristics (e.g., sexual orientation presentation, economic status) of the perpetrator should be strong predictors of biased perpetration, presumably more than for nonbiased perpetration.

It follows that, because personal traits have increased relevance for biased bullying, other risk factors for perpetration—namely, risky lifestyle and delinquency – would be *less* relevant for biased (versus nonbiased) bullying perpetration. Risky lifestyles are believed to be associated with aggressive behavior because they indicate underlying antisocial personality characteristics, contain high criminal opportunity, and/or are associated with deviant peer influences (Walters, 2021). Although risky lifestyles and delinquent behavior are likely correlated with biased perpetration, if the claim that personal characteristics drive biased bullying is true, then these factors should be relatively less predictive of biased (vs nonbiased) perpetration.

In terms of prior research on risk factors of biased and nonbiased perpetration, some work has found that certain risk factors predict biased bullying perpetration more strongly than nonbiased perpetration. For instance, Ozdemir et al. (2020) found that adolescent perpetrators of

ethnic-based bullying differed from the perpetrators of nonbiased bullying in that negative immigrant attitudes and lack of affective empathy and were each more predictive of the former. Caravita et al. (2020)'s mixed methods study also found evidence that negative attitudes towards immigrants distinguished racial bullying perpetration from general bullying perpetration, though both types of perpetration were positively correlated with popularity. Neither study included delinquency or lifestyle variables in their analysis.

On the other hand, studies coming from criminological literature have found that risk factors for the perpetration of nonbiased aggression are also risk factors for the perpetration of biased aggression (e.g., age, impulsivity, prior delinquency; McNeely & Overstreet, 2018). There are also scholars who point out that some theories of crime should apply to biased crime as well. Merton's strain theory (1938) suggests that people who are unable to achieve culturally desired success goals (i.e., wealth) due to blocked access to legitimate means to achieve those goals (i.e., unequal access to resources) may adapt through "innovation." Innovation involves using illegitimate (criminal) means to achieve the success goals. If strained individuals channel their frustration onto out-groups (e.g., "scapegoating"), who they may believe are to blame for their lack of success, strain theory could apply to biased offending. Thus, if strain theory explains both biased and nonbiased offending, risk factors for these two types of aggression may be the same.

Walters (2011) agrees that hate crime offenders are affected by threat and social conditions (as hypothesized by strain and doing difference theories). However, he proposes that low self-control is a key factor driving biased crime. That is, because people with low self-control have a low tolerance threshold for perceived threats, they will commit hate crimes more frequently than people with more self-control even if the level of threat is similar. In support of the application of self-control theory to biased perpetration, one study found that self-control

moderated the association between anti-immigrant sentiment and biased bullying, such that biased bullying was more likely to occur when the youth who held anti-immigrant sentiments had low self-control (Ozdemir, et al., 2016). Further, research has found that offender alcohol and drug use are associated with committing biased crime more strongly than committing nonbiased crime (Messner et al., 2004; Pezella & Fetzer, 2017), suggesting that impulsivity may be especially relevant to understanding biased crime. However, other work finds that impulsivity is related to both biased and nonbiased bullying (e.g., Merrin et al., 2018; Ozdemir et al., 2020). On the whole, research is unclear regarding whether factors like impulsivity or low self-control are more or less strongly associated with biased (vs nonbiased) aggression.

It could also be the case that risky lifestyle and routine activities of youth – as well as the peer influences they are exposed to as a consequence of that lifestyle– explain biased as well as nonbiased crime. While prejudicial motivation and/or perceived threat are clearly relevant for biased aggression (and likely exert distal influence), peer influence in risky situations may be the *proximal* drivers of the behavior. Further, Godinet & Stotzer (2017) find that gang involvement is highly predictive of biased crime among youth, and some work suggests that peer influences are immensely important for biased aggression (Galan et al., 2021).

A final consideration regards the role of victimization. In both the criminological and bullying literatures, it is established that there is a victim-offender overlap, such that some youth are both victims and perpetrators (i.e., bully-victims; Hayne et al., 2001; Nansel et al., 2001). This finding has emerged in a couple of studies on biased bullying as well (Hatchel et al. 2020; Galan et al., 2021). Explanations for this phenomenon vary, although most suggest that shared personality traits, contextual influences, and peer effects are important for understanding the overlap. However, while victimization is expected to be a risk factor for bullying perpetration

and is therefore included in the current analysis, I treat it as a control variable here, as the focus of the current study is on the role of background and lifestyle characteristics (for an analysis focused on the overlap between victimization and perpetration for biased bullying, see Chapter 4 Part A of this dissertation).

In summary, some work suggests that the etiologies of biased and nonbiased crime differ from each other, thereby implying that the risk factors should diverge. Other work would suggest that both behaviors are largely driven by the same factors. This study uses the United States HBSC data from 2009/2010 to examine the risk factors for biased and nonbiased bullying perpetration, each in comparison to no perpetration. I then directly compare biased to nonbiased bullying perpetration and assess whether any background or lifestyle factors are independently associated with biased perpetration (relative to nonbiased perpetration). Because prior research and initial analyses for the present study indicate substantial differences by gender in biased perpetration, I conduct analyses for the full sample as well as separately for males and females. The research questions are as follows:

*RQ1: What are the risk factors for biased and nonbiased bullying perpetration?*

*RQ2: Are personal characteristics/background factors (i.e., gender, family financial hardship) positively associated with biased (versus nonbiased) perpetration?*

*RQ3: Are risky lifestyle/delinquency variables negatively associated with biased perpetration (vs nonbiased perpetration)?*

### **Study Contributions**

Despite the importance of understanding whether there are risk factors that uniquely predict biased bullying, relatively little research has empirically examined this issue, likely due to the infrequency by which national data collections ask student respondents to report on their own bullying perpetration and indicate biased or discriminatory motivation. Thus, the perpetration of



biased bullying by youth is generally understudied among researchers (see Näsi et al., 2016 for a similar observation). Some of the work that has examined biased perpetration has been conducted in Europe and focuses specifically on nativity/ethnicity (Caravita et al., 2020, Ozdemir et al., 2020), so more analyses examining biased perpetration for multiple bias types in the U.S. context are needed. Moreover, past research has examined the predictors of biased offending for youth compared to adults (Stotzer 2017; Godinet & Stozer 217) but does not provide a comparison to nonbiased crime. The current study helps to fill this knowledge gap and highlights the similarities and differences in risk factors for biased and nonbiased bullying. Extending prior research, this study contributes to understanding as to whether intervention and prevention programming for biased bullying perpetration should be gender specific by assessing whether the same risk factors predict biased perpetration for females and males.

### **The Current Study**

The aim of this study is to examine the risk factors for biased and nonbiased bullying perpetration in comparison to both each other and to no perpetration. The hypotheses are centered around expectations for biased versus nonbiased bullying perpetration, given my goal of understanding whether there are risk factors that are unique to biased bully perpetration. First, based on structured action theory (Messerschmidt, 1997), I hypothesize that *male gender will be positively associated with biased bullying perpetration relative to nonbiased bullying perpetration (H1)*. Second, strain theory and the defensive hate crime offender described by McDevitt et al (2002) both expect that people who occupy a low status will use aggressive acts such as hate crime as a mechanism of social control. It is therefore hypothesized that *financial hardship in the home will be positively associated with biased bullying perpetration relative to nonbiased bullying perpetration (H2)*. Third, because perpetrators of biased bullying should be

more likely to be driven by social status and/or threat (either to economic status or to social norms) than the perpetrators of nonbiased bullying, I hypothesize that *risky lifestyle and delinquency variables (i.e., nights with friends, low parental monitoring, been in a fight/drunk/carried a weapon, friends drink) will be negatively associated with biased bullying perpetration (compared to nonbiased perpetration; H3)*. Fourth, based on the previous chapter of this dissertation and on prior research on bullying-victims (Nansel et al., 2001), I expect that *any bullying victimization – and especially biased bullying victimization – will be positively associated with biased (versus nonbiased) perpetration (H4)*.

### **Sample Selection**

The data for this study come from the 2009/2010 United States Health Behavior in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey. I exclude grades 5 and 6 from the analytic sample because these students are not asked several indicators of interest that may indicate the risk factors for biased bullying perpetration (i.e., fighting). The final analytic sample is  $N=8,739$ .

### **Measures**

#### *Dependent Variable*

To measure bullying perpetration, the HBSC survey first asks the students how often they have taken part in any bullying of another student at school in the past couple of months (i.e., general indicator), followed by a measure of more specific behaviors: “How often have you bullied another student(s) at school in the past couple of months in the ways listed below?” with indicators: “I called another student(s) mean names, made fun of them, or teased him or her in a hurtful way”; “I kept another student(s) out of things on purpose, excluded him or her from my group of friends, or completely ignored him or her”; “I hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked another student(s) indoors”; “I spread false rumors about another student(s) and tried to

make others dislike him or her”; “I bullied another student(s) with mean names and comments about his or her race or color”; “I bullied another student(s) with mean names or comments about his or her religion”; “I made sexual jokes, comments, or gestures to another student(s)” ;“I bullied another student using a computer or email messages or pictures” ; “I bullied another student using a cell phone”; “I bullied others outside of school using a computer or e-mail messages or pictures” and “I bullied others outside of school using a cell phone.” Response options are: “I have not bullied another student in this way in the past couple of months,” “only once or twice,” “2 or 3 times a month” and “about once a week and several times a week.” I dichotomize number of perpetration times so that 1= at least once and 0 is never.

I then categorized youth into the following perpetration groups: no perpetration (i.e., have not bullied another student in any way in the past couple of months), any biased perpetration (i.e., bullied another student with mean names about their race, color, or religion or with sexual jokes/comments/gestures at least once or twice in the past couple of months), and nonbiased perpetration only (bullied another student at least once or twice in the past couple of months but did not bully another student with mean names about their race, color, or religion or with sexual jokes/comments/gestures). These mutually exclusive categories are the final dependent variables.

### *Independent Variables*

#### *1. Background Characteristics*

For background characteristics, I include gender (female=1), racial and ethnic identity (Non-Hispanic White, Non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, Non-Hispanic Asian, two or more racial/ethnic identities, and other racial/ethnic identities). Severe financial hardship in the home/low socioeconomic status was measured with the following question “some people go to bed or school hungry because there is not enough food at home. How often does this happen to you?”.

This variable was coded as =1 if the student responded “always,” “often,” or “sometimes” as opposed to “never.” Age was categorized as younger (10-13) and older (14-18), and community types were categorized as Urban, Suburban, and rural/other. Not being born in the United States was included because immigrant status may affect risk of biased perpetration.

### *2. Lifestyle Variables*

Lifestyle variables were included to assess whether risky routine activities and delinquency influence risk of biased perpetration. Low parental monitoring, or parents not knowing whereabouts, was included using two measures asking about how much the maternal and parental guardian know where the respondent is after school, measured on a scale of 1-4 (1= they know a lot, 4=don't have/see). I also included the number of nights spend with friends (1-7), whether the student had been in a school fight in the past year (1=yes). Delinquent lifestyle was assessed using the following measure: “On how many occasions (if any) have you done the following things in the past 30 days?” followed by “been drunk” (1=yes), “carried a weapon” (1-yes). Friends' drinking was also dichotomized based on the number of friends the respondent estimates “get drunk” (1=a few friends, most friends, or all friends, 0=no friends). Finally, I included a dislike school scale, which served as a proxy for school attachment. The dislike school scale was measured one a scale of 1 to 4, asking the students how, at present, they feel about school (1=I like it a lot, 4=I don't like it at all).

### *3. Victimization*

The victimization indicators were measured and coded nearly identically to the perpetration measures, except that the described behaviors were done against the student instead of perpetrated by the student respondent. Thus, these groups were no bullying victimization (i.e., “I have not been bullied at school in the past couple of months”), any biased bullying victimization

(i.e., “I was bullied with mean names and comments about my religion, about my race or color,” and “other students made sexual jokes, comments, or gestures to me”), and nonbiased victimization only (i.e., experienced any of the other types of bullying).

### **Analytic Strategy**

First, I calculated summary statistics for the sample of youth. Second, I examined the prevalence of all study variables across the bullying perpetration categories (no perpetration, any biased perpetration, nonbiased perpetration only) to assess how the potential risk factors were associated with each type of perpetration at the bivariate level. Third, I estimated multinomial logistic regressions predicting biased perpetration (vs no perpetration), nonbiased perpetration (vs no perpetration), and biased perpetration (vs nonbiased perpetration) for the full sample as well as for males and females separately. Multinomial logistic regression modeling was used because the outcome was a categorical variable consisting of three categories, and I was interested in examining the risk of being in each group versus all other groups.

### **Results**

#### ***Summary Statistics***

More than half of youth in the sample (60%) did not perpetrate any bullying in the past couple of months (Table 7-7). Among youth who perpetrated bullying, about twice as many (27% of the full sample) perpetrated nonbiased bullying only as perpetrated any biased bullying (13% of the full sample). Bullying victimization, on the other hand, was more common (only 49% of the sample had not been victimized). Unlike for perpetration, biased bullying victimization was more common than biased bullying perpetration (27% compared to 24%). Regarding the background characteristics, just over half the sample was male (52%), 54% were non-Hispanic White, and 60% were between the ages of 14 and 18 (40% were between the ages of 10 and 13). The most

prevalent community type was suburban (43%), and 8% of youth were born outside of the U.S. A quarter of the youth had ever gone to bed or school hungry. For the lifestyle variables, the prevalence of being drunk or having carried a weapon in past thirty days were each fairly low (15%), whereas been in a fight in the past year and friends' drinking behavior were higher (33% and 54%, respectively). Parents not knowing their whereabouts was also low (18%), and youth reported an average of 2.25 nights a week spend out with friends.

### ***Study Variables Across Perpetration Types***

Next, I examined the prevalence of the study variables for youth who did not perpetrate bullying, who perpetrated any biased bullying, and who perpetrated nonbiased bullying only (Table 7-8). These results indicate descriptive differences for belonging to each perpetration group prior to the multivariable analyses, which will reveal the *unique or independent* risk factors for biased bullying perpetration (i.e., accounting for all influences simultaneously). The perpetrators of biased bullying were majority male (66%), though there were not large differences for most of the other background characteristics, such as race/ethnicity. Experiencing going to bed or school hungry (indicating financial hardship in the home) was high among the biased perpetrators (35%), as was reporting that parents do not know the student's whereabouts (28%). For the risky lifestyle variables, there were fairly large differences across the perpetration groups, such that non-perpetrators were lowest on most variables, followed by nonbiased perpetrators, and highest for biased perpetrators. For example, 25% of non-perpetrators had been in a fight in the past year, compared 41% of nonbiased perpetrators and 55% of biased perpetrators. The majority of biased perpetrators were victimized by biased bullying (62%), whereas the nonbiased perpetrators group contained roughly equal shares of nonvictims, biased victims, and nonbiased victims (see Table 7-8).

### ***Predictors of Biased and Nonbiased Bullying Perpetration***

*Full sample.* Table 7-9 shows the results of the multinomial logistic regression model predicting biased perpetration (vs no perpetration), nonbiased perpetration (vs no perpetration), and biased perpetration (vs nonbiased perpetration) for the full sample. As shown, being female was negatively associated with biased bullying perpetration (i.e., less than half as likely as males, see Models 1 and 3). Black youth had increased odds of biased perpetration (vs no perpetration and vs nonbiased perpetration) in comparison to White youth. Compared to White youth, Hispanic youth had 43% increased odds of biased versus nonbiased perpetration (RRR=1.43;95% CI [1.12, 1.82]), whereas the other racial and ethnic groups did not have statistically different odds of perpetration in comparison to White youth. Older (vs younger) youth had decreased odds of nonbiased perpetration (vs no perpetration), but age was not associated with biased versus nonbiased perpetration. Youth living in urban settings and who were not born in the U.S. had slightly decreased odds of biased perpetration relative to no perpetration.

All lifestyle variables were positively associated with biased perpetration in comparison to no perpetration, with the largest risk ratio being for carried a weapon in the past 30 days (RRR=2.58, 95 CI [2.01, 3.30]). Most (but not all) of these variables were also associated with nonbiased perpetration in comparison to no perpetration (i.e., parents knowing whereabouts and liking school were each unrelated to nonbiased perpetration). For the model comparing the outcomes of biased perpetration and nonbiased perpetration, only carrying a weapon in the past 30 days distinguished biased perpetrators. Specifically, carrying a weapon in the past 30 days increased odds of biased perpetration by a factor of 2.03 (RRR=2.03, 95 CI [1.52, 2.70]). Finally, biased victimization was strongly and positively associated with biased perpetration in comparison to both no perpetration and to nonbiased perpetration, whereas nonbiased

victimization only was negatively associated with biased (versus nonbiased) perpetration (RRR=.62, 95% CI[.48,.82]).

*Males.* Given that both prior research and the initial findings from this study indicated gender differences in biased bullying involvement, I assessed risk factors for biased perpetration separately for males (Table 7-10) and females (Table 7-11). For males, most of the lifestyle variables were positively associated with both biased and nonbiased perpetration in comparison to no perpetration (except for parents knowing whereabouts and nights with friends, which were associated with neither type of perpetration). Few of the background characteristics were related to either type of perpetration, though youth living in Urban areas and youth who were not born in the U.S. had decreased odds of biased perpetration relative to no perpetration.

For the biased versus nonbiased perpetration model, Black and Hispanic (versus White) youth were more likely to perpetrate biased versus nonbiased bullying. Parents not knowing whereabouts, nights out with friends, and school attachment were not associated with biased perpetration (vs no perpetration) in the male-only model. As with the full model, carrying a weapon in the past 30 days was the only lifestyle variable that distinguished biased perpetration from nonbiased perpetration. Similar to the full sample, biased victimization was associated with biased perpetration versus nonbiased perpetration, whereas nonbiased victimization was negatively associated with biased versus nonbiased perpetration.

*Females.* In the female-only model (see Table 7-11), identifying as Black race/ethnicity (versus White) was positively associated with biased perpetration in comparison to both no perpetration and nonbiased perpetration. All lifestyle variables were associated with increased odds of biased perpetration versus no perpetration (except for friends drinking alcohol), including parent not knowing whereabouts (RRR=1.61, 95% CI[1.13, 2.29]) and not liking



school (RRR=1.27, 95% CI[1.09, 1.49]), each of which were not statistically significant in the male-only models. Like the male-only models and full sample models, most lifestyle variables were positively associated with biased and nonbiased perpetration in comparison to no perpetration, though weapon carrying and biased victimization distinguished biased perpetration from nonbiased perpetration.

## **Discussion**

Biased bullying can cause substantial harm to direct and indirect victims as well as to the school community (Noelle, 2002; Iganski and Lagou, 2015). Despite this, little is known about the perpetrators of the behavior. The current study helped fill this crucial gap in the literature by examining the risk factors for biased bullying perpetration (relative to nonbiased bullying perpetration and no perpetration) in a nationally representative sample of youth. A key goal was assessing whether any lifestyle or background factors were independently associated with biased perpetration, as implied by some theories of biased aggression which hypothesize that perceived social status and threat are underlying motivations for the behavior (e.g., Perry, 2001). Analyses were split by gender to be consistent with prior evidence which suggests that biased offending differs across gender (Ozdemir et al., 2020). Several key findings emerged from these analyses.

First, and in support of hypothesis 1, males were significantly more likely than females to perpetrate biased (versus nonbiased) bullying. This result is consistent with previous work on biased bullying as well as the hate crime literatures (Ozdemir et al., 2020; Larchotte et al., 2010; Lantz 2022). It also aligns with theoretical work which suggests that biased aggression is used by males to display power and normative masculinity (Messerschmidt, 1997; Bufkin, 1999) Even so, the number of biased bullying perpetrators who were female was by no means trivial or so small as to not warrant further study. Moreover, as pointed out by other scholars (see Lantz,

2022; Stotzer et al., 2020) researchers should devote more attention to understanding female perpetrators of biased acts and the extent to which socialized gender roles helps us understand this discriminatory behavior for both males and females. In short, this study suggest that the near exclusive focus on male perpetrators – or the implicit assumption of male perpetrators – is unwarranted.

Unexpectedly, student racial/ethnic identity emerged as a risk factor for biased bullying perpetration. Specifically, Black and Hispanic youth were more likely than White youth to perpetrate biased bullying relative to nonbiased bullying, and this finding generally held across gender (i.e., aside from for Hispanic females). In other words, Black and Hispanic youth were more likely than White youth to bully other youth with mean names or comments pertaining to their victims' sex/sexuality, race/color, or religion. Although minority racial and ethnic groups are typically examined as victims of biased aggression, it is not usually hypothesized that members of minoritized social groups are the perpetrators of biased aggression.

However, this finding is consistent with Larchotte et al (2010), who found that non-White youth perpetrated (and were victimized by) racial bullying in Canada, as well as with FBI reports which indicate that the second highest rate of racial hate crimes are reported by White victims (FBI, 2016). Further, Hong et al. (2022) found that both racial majority *and* racial minority youth experienced racial discrimination, which was associated with depressive symptoms. As depressive symptoms were, in turn, associated with bullying perpetration in their study, the authors surmised that experiences with prejudice probably influence youth of any racial and ethnic identity to be aggressive towards others. That is, negative experiences with discrimination were presumed to cause emotional distress and maladaptive behavior, which can turn aggressive and lead to victimizing others. It is also possible that racial and ethnic minority youth who

experience or witness racial discrimination in some way either at school or outside of school turn to perpetration of such behaviors in the absence of viable alternatives to reduce strain, a possibility that would also align with social learning theory (Sutherland, 1947). Another explanation is that because power and increasing one's social status relative to others is hypothesized as being a driver of hate crime (Perry, 2001), minoritized groups may use these acts to gain status they are blocked from obtaining in other ways. In other words, due to inequality and disadvantage, non-White youth may assert power through biased aggression (see Lantz, 2022 for a similar argument regarding women).

Alternatively, non-White youth might be more likely to attend schools with low school connectedness/cohesion or norms against such behavior, which have been found to be related to biased aggression. For example, Ozdemir & Ozdemir (2020) found that the prevalence of ethnic-motivated bullying in Swedish schools was affected by "perceived inter-ethnic contact norms and cooperation" in the classroom. Other research has found that explicit anti-bullying policies can reduce homophobic bullying (Boyland, Kirkeby, & Boyland, 2018; Kull, Greytak, Kosciw, & Villenas, 2016). One study that specifically focused on bias-based victimization found that supportive (i.e., any initiative emphasizing helping students with social, emotional, and behavior problems, and providing conflict resolution or behavior management instruction) but not punitive school discipline related to lower rates of homophobic bullying (Day et al., 2016). Accordingly, it is possible that school context factors are important for biased bullying, related to race/ethnicity, and insufficiently accounted for in the current analyses. However, these explanations are speculative, and the differences in perpetration of biased bullying across student race/ethnicity found in this study warrant further research attention.

Given this multitude of possible explanations, future research should investigate the reasons that non-White students provide for their bullying perpetration. Qualitative research study designs would be one potential avenue for this research (for example, see Ballaschk, Wachs, and Krause, 2021). In such a study, researchers could attempt to ascertain whether students are disadvantaged or discriminated against in other ways and are using this behavior to gain status. It could also inquire as to whether students have learned the behavior from others in their school or community and are mimicking the behavior. This research would have implications for how to approach anti-bullying programming that targets discriminatory aggression in a culturally relevant manner.

Another unexpected finding pertains to age. Results indicated that older age (i.e., 14-18) was negatively associated with *nonbiased* perpetration relative to no perpetration but was not statistically significant in the biased perpetration (vs no perpetration) model. This finding implies that students generally reduce their involvement in nonbiased perpetration as they get older but do not appear to similarly reduce their involvement in biased perpetration as they age.

The second hypothesis –that going to school/bed hungry (an indicator of family financial hardship) would be positively associated with biased (vs nonbiased) perpetration – was not supported. In contrast to McDevitt (2002)'s defensive hate crime offending and threat theories which expect that economically disadvantaged groups use biased aggression to gain status, it appears that low socioeconomic status may not be relevant for committing biased aggression among youth at school. Defensive hate crime offending may be more relevant for adults.

Third, although the descriptive analyses (see Table 2) revealed that many risky lifestyle/delinquency factors (e.g., been drunk, number of nights spent with friends) were more prominent among biased bullying perpetrators than among nonbiased bullying perpetrators (and

than among non-perpetrators), only one lifestyle factor was *independently* associated with biased (versus nonbiased) perpetration in the multivariable analyses. In other words, although youth who perpetrate biased bullying are a very delinquent subset of the student population, their delinquent/risky lifestyles do not set them apart from the nonbiased perpetrators. This generally aligns with the logic that risky lifestyles would not be uniquely associated with biased aggression because personal characteristics should play a more prominent role. However, it does not support my hypothesis that such factors would be *negatively* associated with biased (versus nonbiased) perpetration. It appears that risky lifestyles and delinquency are prominent among both types of perpetrators at similar rates.

The exception was weapon carrying. It is worth repeating that 36% of youth who perpetrated any biased bullying carried a weapon in the past 30 days, whereas only 9% of non-perpetrators and 16% of nonbiased perpetrators carried a weapon in the past 30 days. Further, weapon carrying was positively associated with biased perpetration for both males and females. These results suggest that there is a connection between weapon carrying and biased aggression, although it is not clear whether the weapon carrying precedes or follows the perpetration of biased aggression. It is possible that, as (arguably) the most delinquent behavior among the measured indicators, high weapon carrying among biased perpetrators indicates their more serious delinquency involvement. To the contrary, it could be that biased perpetrators are victimized more often at school (which is supported by the descriptive table) due to more conflict with other students, and that they carry weapons for protection or due to fear of victimization (Wilcox et al., 2006).

A third potential explanation for the weapon carrying finding is that family, neighborhood, or community settings that normalize weapon carrying (see Carlson 2019) are the

same settings where prejudicial beliefs proliferate. That is, settings which encourage weapon carrying for safety, protection, or hunting could be more homogeneous, traditional, or have authoritarian parenting styles, which may influence the formation of certain types of biases and prejudice. Though the current study accounted for rural/urbanicity of the school, (not) being born in the U.S., and financial strain, it remains possible that these measures do not fully capture the community context as it pertains to prejudice and discrimination.

Fourth, consistent with prior research on victim-bullies (Nansel, 2001), bullying victimization was positively associated with bullying perpetration overall. In particular, biased victimization was positively associated with both biased and nonbiased perpetration, though the coefficient was larger for biased perpetration. Thus, consistent with the previous chapter of this dissertation and with a few existing studies (Galan et al., 2021), experiencing biased victimization appears to be an important risk factor for biased bullying perpetration, although the directionality of this association is not clear. Future research focused on understanding biased bullying should use longitudinal data to further disentangle this association.

Regarding the gender-specific analyses, parents not knowing whereabouts and not liking school were statistically significantly associated with biased perpetration (vs no perpetration) in the female-only but not the male-only model. These findings may indicate support for the application of social bonding theory (Hirschi, 1969) to biased aggression among females, which would suggest that low attachment to pro-social institutions such as family and school may increase odds of bullying perpetration due to lack of social control restraining youth from the behavior. If these findings hold across other studies, they would imply that gender-specific programming, intervention, and resources for preventing biased bullying in schools is warranted.

Existing school-based interventions for youth generally focus on either discrimination/ stigma *or* bullying, while few programs focus on the nexus between the two (i.e., stigma- or bias-based bullying, Earnshaw et al., 2018). Earnshaw et al. (2018) suggests that interventions should be theory-based (e.g., intergroup contact theory, McKown, 2005), multicomponent, interdisciplinary, and evaluated with close attention to context. Moreover, she stresses that many stigma-based bullying interventions focus on the individual level, so programming focused on the interpersonal and/or ecological level is needed (Earnshaw et al., 2018)

On the whole, the findings from this study indicated that some characteristics (gender, race) were independently associated with biased perpetration in comparison to nonbiased perpetration, which lends support for the expectation that characteristics are especially relevant for understanding risk of biased perpetration. The lifestyle measures were important for understanding any perpetration, but were not uniquely associated with biased perpetration, aside from weapon carrying. Thus, biased bullying appears to occur among delinquent youth, although being delinquent does not appear to distinguish perpetrators of biased bullying. In addition, although some youth engage in only biased bullying, other youth engage in both biased and nonbiased bullying (Ozdemir, Giles & Ozdemir, 2020). Thus, although there likely are motivations for perpetrating biased victimization that do not apply to nonbiased victimization, a comprehensive theory explaining biased offending should explain the commonalities across both biased and non-biased offending.

### ***Limitations***

This study is not without limitations. First, given the cross sectional nature of the study, there was not sufficient temporal ordering of measures to imply causality. That is, it is not clear whether the bullying victimization or perpetration occurred before or after the risky behaviors,

and some risky behaviors may have been engaged in as a result of the bullying experience. This issue is less of a concern for the background characteristics, however. Future longitudinal research should reevaluate these findings, particularly regarding weapon carrying and biased perpetration, potentially across types of communities to assess whether youth who carry weapons and perpetrate biased bullying are concentrated in rural communities.

As with the other studies in this dissertation using HBSC data, some bias types were not captured in this analyses. Specifically, biased perpetration based on disability prejudice or appearance prejudice, for example, were not included because they were not measured in the data. Relatedly, sexually biased bullying as measured in this study likely encompassed gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation, so future work should attempt to parse out these bias types when possible. It could be that, due to the large portion of youth in these data who reported engaging in biased bullying related to sexuality, some risk factors would not be the same in studies with higher percentages of other bias types.

Factors about the school environment that may related to biased bullying perpetration, such as teacher protocol for biased bullying intervention or presence of Gay-Straight-Alliance and other diversity-supporting student organizations, were not included in this analysis (or measured in the data), so it is possible that these factors influenced the findings. Finally, research has shown that some youth experience multiple forms of biased bullying, so it would be interesting to examine whether youth who bully each other in this way do so across bias types (i.e., indiscriminately) or do so pertaining to only one bias type. Such an analyses could also reveal whether the risk factors for these types of perpetrator differ.



## **Conclusion**

This study contributed to the literature on biased bullying at school by assessing whether there are risk factors related to background characteristics or lifestyle that are uniquely associated with biased bullying. Results indicated that male youth, Black and Hispanic youth, weapon carriers, and youth who experienced any form of victimization (especially biased victimization) had increased risk of biased bullying perpetration relative to nonbiased bullying perpetration. These findings imply that although youth who perpetuate biased bullying are delinquent, their delinquency is generally not what distinguishes them from other types of bullies.

## CHAPTER 7 PART B – TABLES

Table 7-7. Summary statistics, HBCS 2009-2010 (N=8,739)

	%/Mean(SD)
Perpetration (past couple of months)	
No perpetration	60
Biased perpetration	13
Nonbiased perpetration	27
Background characteristics	
Male	52
Female	48
White	54
Black	15
Hispanic	14
Two plus	7
Asian	4
Other	6
Age 10-13	40
Age 14-18	60
Urban	25
Suburban	43
Rural/other	32
Not born in the U.S.	8
Go to bed/school hungry	25
Lifestyle variables	
Parent not know whereabouts	18
Nights with friends (1-7)	2.25 (.05)
Been in fight (past year)	33
Been drunk (past 30 days)	15
Carried a weapon (past 30 days)	15
Any friends drink	54
Don't like school (1-4)	2.08 (.02)
Victimization (past couple of months)	
None	49
Any biased	27
Only nonbiased	24

Notes: SD= Standard Deviation.

Table 7-8: Study variables by type of bullying perpetration (N=8,739)

	No Perpetration	Biased Perpetration	Nonbiased Perpetration
Background characteristics	%/Mean(SD)	%/Mean(SD)	%/Mean(SD)
Male	51	66	49
Female	49	34	51
White	53	49	57
Black	15	19	13
Hispanic	15	14	12
Two plus	7	7	7
Asian	4	4	4
Other	7	7	6
Age 10-13	40	35	41
Age 14-18	60	65	59
Urban	27	21	23
Suburban	43	46	42
Rural/other	30	32	34
Not born in the U.S.	8	9	7
Go to bed/school hungry	21	35	28
Lifestyle variables			
Parent not know whereabouts	15	28	22
Nights with friends (1-7)	2.11 (.05)	2.73 (.10)	2.33 (.07)
Been in fight (past year)	25	55	41
Been drunk (past 30 days)	10	29	18
Carried a weapon (past 30 days)	9	36	16
Any friends drink	47	69	63
Don't like school (1-4)	2.00 (.02)	2.28 (.04)	2.15 (.03)
Victimization			
None	62	25	33
Any biased	15	62	35
Only nonbiased	23	13	32

Notes: SD= standard deviation.

Table 7-9. Multinomial logistic regressions for bullying perpetration (N=8,739)

	Biased Perpetration (vs None)		Nonbiased Perpetration (vs None)		Biased Perpetration (vs Nonbiased)	
	RRR	95% CI	RRR	95% CI	RRR	95% CI
<b>Background characteristics</b>						
Female (ref=Male)	0.44***	[0.35 0.54]	0.97	[0.83 1.14]	0.45***	[0.36 0.58]
Black (ref= White)	1.61**	[1.17 2.22]	0.85	[0.66 1.08]	1.90***	[1.44 2.51]
Hispanic	1.19	[0.88 1.62]	0.84	[0.64 1.08]	1.43**	[1.12 1.82]
Two plus	0.89	[0.59 1.36]	0.83	[0.65 1.06]	1.08	[0.74 1.57]
Asian	1.34	[0.75 2.39]	1.23	[0.74 2.02]	1.09	[0.71 1.68]
Other	1.03	[0.69 1.52]	0.86	[0.62 1.18]	1.20	[0.85 1.69]
Age 14-18 (ref= age 10-13)	0.87	[0.69 1.09]	0.75**	[0.64 0.89]	1.15	[0.94 1.41]
Urban (ref=suburb)	0.71*	[0.52 0.95]	0.89	[0.72 1.09]	0.80	[0.62 1.02]
Rural/other	1.00	[0.78 1.27]	1.09	[0.89 1.35]	0.91	[0.73 1.14]
Not born in the U.S.	0.71*	[0.50 1.00]	0.79	[0.56 1.11]	0.89	[0.65 1.23]
Go to bed/school hungry	1.22	[0.98 1.53]	1.10	[0.91 1.33]	1.11	[0.87 1.42]
<b>Lifestyle variables</b>						
Parent not know whereabouts	1.48**	[1.15 1.92]	1.24	[0.99 1.55]	1.20	[0.93 1.55]
Nights with friends (1-7)	1.07**	[1.02 1.13]	1.04*	[1.00 1.07]	1.03	[0.99 1.08]
Been in fight (past year)	1.72***	[1.39 2.14]	1.55***	[1.32 1.82]	1.11	[0.91 1.37]
Been drunk (past 30 days)	1.73***	[1.33 2.26]	1.29*	[1.06 1.58]	1.34	[0.99 1.82]
Carried a weapon (past 30 days)	2.58***	[2.01 3.30]	1.27*	[1.02 1.58]	2.03***	[1.52 2.70]
Any friends drink alcohol	1.77***	[1.36 2.29]	1.77***	[1.54 2.04]	1.00	[0.79 1.26]
Don't like school (1-4)	1.11*	[1.00 1.23]	1.07	[0.98 1.18]	1.03	[0.94 1.14]
<b>Victimization (ref=none)</b>						
Any biased	11.07***	[8.76 14.00]	4.02***	[3.38 4.79]	2.75***	[2.19 3.46]
Only nonbiased	1.67***	[1.26 2.20]	2.67***	[2.22 3.21]	0.62***	[0.48 0.82]

Notes: Exponentiated coefficients; 95% confidence intervals in brackets

Table 7-10: Multinomial logistic regressions for bullying perpetration: Males (N=4,522)

	Biased Perpetration (vs None)		Nonbiased Perpetration (vs None)		Biased Perpetration (vs Nonbiased)	
	RRR	95% CI	RRR	95% CI	RRR	95% CI
<b>Background characteristics</b>						
Black (ref= White)	1.32	[0.90 1.95]	0.78	[0.55 1.10]	1.69**	[1.15 2.49]
Hispanic	1.30	[0.89 1.91]	0.91	[0.70 1.18]	1.43*	[1.03 1.98]
Two plus	0.85	[0.49 1.46]	0.67*	[0.46 0.97]	1.27	[0.71 2.26]
Asian	1.16	[0.62 2.19]	1.08	[0.64 1.84]	1.07	[0.62 1.87]
Other	0.98	[0.63 1.53]	0.92	[0.59 1.43]	1.06	[0.65 1.73]
Age 14-18 (ref= age 10-13)	0.90	[0.66 1.24]	0.83	[0.67 1.02]	1.09	[0.84 1.42]
Urban (ref=suburb)	0.59*	[0.39 0.89]	0.85	[0.67 1.10]	0.69*	[0.49 0.96]
Rural/other	0.99	[0.73 1.35]	1.11	[0.84 1.46]	0.90	[0.66 1.22]
Not born US	0.62*	[0.41 0.93]	0.75	[0.52 1.09]	0.82	[0.53 1.26]
Go to bed/school hungry	1.27	[0.97 1.67]	1.09	[0.85 1.40]	1.17	[0.87 1.56]
<b>Lifestyle variables</b>						
Parent not know whereabouts	1.35	[0.99 1.84]	1.12	[0.82 1.55]	1.20	[0.87 1.65]
Nights with friends (1-7)	1.06	[0.99 1.13]	1.01	[0.96 1.06]	1.05	[1.00 1.10]
Been in fight (past year)	1.68***	[1.29 2.20]	1.56***	[1.27 1.93]	1.08	[0.81 1.44]
Been drunk (past 30 days)	1.75**	[1.19 2.56]	1.38*	[1.05 1.81]	1.27	[0.87 1.85]
Carried a weapon (past 30 days)	2.64***	[1.99 3.50]	1.37*	[1.06 1.76]	1.93***	[1.38 2.71]
Any friends drink alcohol	1.87***	[1.39 2.52]	1.69***	[1.33 2.14]	1.11	[0.83 1.47]
Don't like school (1-4)	1.01	[0.88 1.16]	1.02	[0.91 1.14]	0.99	[0.86 1.14]
<b>Victimization (ref=none)</b>						
Any biased	9.59***	[7.15 12.85]	3.47***	[2.58 4.66]	2.77***	[2.07 3.69]
Only nonbiased	1.59**	[1.14 2.21]	2.56***	[2.00 3.28]	0.62**	[0.45 0.85]

Notes: Exponentiated coefficients; 95% confidence intervals in brackets

Table 7-11: Multinomial logistic regression for bullying perpetration: Females (N=4,216)

	Biased Perpetration (vs None)			Nonbiased Perpetration (vs None)			Biased Perpetration (vs Nonbiased)		
	RRR	95% CI		RRR	95% CI		RRR	95% CI	
<b>Background characteristics</b>									
Black (ref= White)	2.14***	[1.41	3.25]	0.93	[0.71	1.22]	2.30***	[1.54	3.41]
Hispanic	1.01	[0.68	1.50]	0.77	[0.54	1.08]	1.32	[0.83	2.08]
Two plus	0.91	[0.56	1.50]	0.98	[0.62	1.54]	0.93	[0.58	1.50]
Asian	1.71	[0.72	4.10]	1.38	[0.73	2.61]	1.24	[0.59	2.64]
Other	1.09	[0.54	2.20]	0.79	[0.49	1.27]	1.39	[0.72	2.67]
Age 14-18 (ref= age 10-13)	0.85	[0.62	1.16]	0.70**	[0.55	0.87]	1.22	[0.89	1.68]
Urban (ref=suburb)	0.93	[0.67	1.29]	0.91	[0.69	1.19]	1.03	[0.70	1.50]
Rural/other	1.00	[0.69	1.44]	1.07	[0.78	1.45]	0.94	[0.61	1.45]
Not born US	1.02	[0.56	1.86]	0.88	[0.53	1.45]	1.17	[0.66	2.06]
Go to bed/school hungry	1.15	[0.81	1.64]	1.10	[0.87	1.40]	1.04	[0.74	1.47]
<b>Lifestyle variables</b>									
Parent not know whereabouts	1.61**	[1.13	2.29]	1.33*	[1.04	1.71]	1.21	[0.86	1.71]
Nights with friends (1-7)	1.10*	[1.02	1.19]	1.08***	[1.04	1.12]	1.02	[0.95	1.10]
Been in fight (past year)	1.79***	[1.32	2.43]	1.56**	[1.19	2.05]	1.15	[0.86	1.54]
Been drunk (past 30 days)	1.81**	[1.21	2.69]	1.22	[0.91	1.62]	1.48	[0.97	2.27]
Carried a weapon (past 30 days)	2.13**	[1.25	3.64]	1.00	[0.66	1.50]	2.14***	[1.42	3.23]
Any friends drink alcohol	1.48	[0.94	2.33]	1.78***	[1.48	2.15]	0.83	[0.52	1.33]
Don't like school (1-4)	1.27**	[1.09	1.49]	1.13	[0.98	1.32]	1.12	[0.96	1.31]
<b>Victimization (ref=none)</b>									
Any biased	15.33***	[10.40	22.61]	4.65***	[3.71	5.82]	3.30***	[2.14	5.09]
Only nonbiased	2.10**	[1.31	3.37]	2.86***	[2.20	3.71]	0.73	[0.46	1.16]

Notes: Exponentiated coefficients; 95% confidence intervals in brackets

## Chapter 8. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

There is a fairly substantial body of research on hate crime. Less work has examined the victimization and perpetration of bias-motivated incidents among adolescents in the school setting. This dissertation sought to increase understanding of adolescents' experiences with biased incidents by investigating (1) whether experiencing biased victimization is more impactful on youth adjustment than experiencing nonbiased victimization, (2) the extent to which youth experience both biased and nonbiased victimization, and (3) the risk factors for biased and nonbiased victimization and perpetration, including an assessment of whether either of these experiences increases risk of the other (i.e., the victim-perpetrator overlap). See Table 8-1 for a summary of the hypotheses and findings. Based on the findings of this research, conclusions can be drawn about the impacts of biased victimization, the co-occurrence of biased and nonbiased victimization, and risk factors specific to biased incidents.

### **Impacts of Biased Victimization**

#### *Summary of Findings*

The first study of this dissertation offered strong evidence that experiencing bias-motivated victimization at school is associated with greater impacts on positive youth adjustment than experiencing nonbiased victimization at school. In comparison to nonbiased victimization, experiencing biased victimization was more strongly associated with perceived negative effects on physical health, self-esteem, social relationships, and schoolwork, as well as with an overall unwellness measure. These findings held across two separate, nationally representative datasets (NCVS and HBSC) that contained data from different time periods (i.e., 2009/2010 and 2017/2019). The findings also held across two different ways of measuring biased victimization. The HBSC directly asked students about being bullied with mean names or comments about

particular identities, whereas the NCVS first asked about bullying victimization more generally and then asked if students perceived that any of this bullying was related to their identity. Hence, it does not appear that these findings are an artifact of how biased bullying was measured.

Study 1 Part A (NCVS) examined a sample of victims and established that students have greater odds of negative impacts when they experience biased (vs nonbiased) victimization for several bias types. The odds of experiencing negative impacts increased as the number of bias types (race, gender, etc.) involved in the victimization increased. Supplementary analyses indicated that the higher odds of impacts for biased victims was present regardless of whether physical victimization was experienced as a component of the victimization. This result suggests that although biased victimization appears to involve physical victimization more often than does nonbiased victimization, the presence of physical victimization does not explain the greater impacts of biased victimization. Similarly, greater odds of impacts for biased (vs nonbiased) victimization was found for students with low grades as well as for students with high grades, suggesting that the findings do not apply only to students who are strongly bonded to school.

Study 1 Part B built on the findings from Part A by using a more rigorous analytic strategy (i.e., coarsened exact matching) to ensure that comparison groups (i.e., nonvictims and nonbiased victims) were similar to biased victims on potentially confounding influences. Thus, Part B strengthened the inference that the impacts were related to the bias by limiting the number of other differences across groups. Use of this analytic strategy is important because victims of biased bullying differ from victims of nonbiased bullying, and these differences might be related to unwellness, confounding the findings. Thus, matching students on gender, race/ethnicity, age, community type, going to school or bed hungry, and not being born in the United States helped



ensure that the results were not due to observable, pre-exposure differences between students who experienced biased victimization versus those who did not.

Moreover, Part B also strengthened causal inference by introducing an element of temporal ordering, as the indicator for unwellness (the outcome) pertained to the past week, whereas the bullying indicator (exposure) pertained to the past couple of months. Corroborating the findings from Part A, I found that biased victims had greater unwellness than nonbiased victims even after matching. Part B therefore demonstrated it is unlikely that the greater impacts of biased victimization are due differences in the types of victims being targeted.

### ***Conclusions & Implications***

I conclude from these results that experiencing biased victimization is more impactful for students than is nonbiased victimization. Consistent with the claims of hate crime scholars, it is likely that the prejudice, denigration of personhood, and “othering” of the victim implied by discriminatory victimization elevates harms beyond the harms inflicted by non-discriminatory victimization (Perry, 2001; Latnz & Kim, 2019). Biased aggression reinforces the social hierarchy and is a display of power or superiority (Perry, 2001; 2015). It establishes the victim’s identity as different from (and inferior to) normative identity and characterizes the victim as devalued as a result of traits that are not chosen. I suggest – as many have before me – that the greater impacts of biased victimization stem from the dehumanization that emerges from such acts. Indeed, a key reason why victimization can be so harmful is because it shatters assumptions about the benevolence and meaningfulness of the world (Janoff-Bulman, 1989, 1992). There may be a particularly high likelihood of such shattering when the victimization involves discrimination, as biased incidents are likely perceived by the victims as more unfair, malicious, or unavoidable than incidents not motivated by prejudice.

In tandem with the inherent harms of discrimination, another element of biased incidents that might contribute to these elevated impacts is the public nature of the victimization. The display of superiority involved in biased aggression (especially among adolescents) is often in front of peers in a *public setting* (in this case, school), among youth who will see each other again for the rest of the school year, and probably for years after that. Thus, it is likely that this message of animosity is felt acutely not solely due to the interpersonal interaction between victim and offender but because of the broadcasting of this devaluation for an audience. A founder of the hate crime offender typology suggests that many youthful offenders do not harbor sincere hatred against the target, but rather “more than half of all hate crimes are categorized as *thrill-motivated*, that is, as attacks on people who are different in some socially significant way to gain a sense of power and dominance as well as peer acceptance” (Levin & Reichelmann, 2015: P. 1547). I speculate that it is not just the rejecting of the victims’ identity but the *performance* of rejecting the victims’ identity in front of peers that is harmful for victims.

School violence research emphasizes that bullying and school victimization are typically perpetrated in the presence of bystanders and peers (i.e., more than 80% of the time; Hawkins et al., 2001) and are often motivated by status attainment within the school social network rather than reflective of an aggressive personality on the part of the bully (Faris & Felmlee, 2011: 2014; Salmivalli 2010). In fact, Salmivalli (2010) points out that bullying in Scandinavian countries was originally described as “mobbing,” or a form of group aggression rather than an interaction between victim and perpetrator. Moreover, criminological research finds that youth are more likely than adults to offend in groups, especially in the commission of biased aggression (Godinet & Stozer, 2017; Jones et al., 2018) and co-offending is associated with greater victim impacts than solo-offending (Lantz & Kim, 2019).

The social humiliation involved in public bullying is likely amplified by bias motivation. Most accounts of biased aggression among youth suggest that a primary goal of the behavior is peer acceptance (Levin & Reichle, 2015; Ballaschk et al., 2021), and it is likely that this peer reaction affects victims as well. It may therefore be critical that prevention and intervention efforts consider social psychological explanations for hate-motivated, group behavior as theoretical grounding for their programming. For example, the deindividuation that occurs in group settings (Aronson, 1999) is undoubtedly relevant to understanding biased victimization as well as other hate-motivated violent events, such as lynchings (Ritchey & Ruback, 2018). Raising children's awareness of their role in bullying as a bystander or audience and changing the reward structure of classroom bullying through focus on the group reaction should be impactful for reducing both the prevalence of bullying and its impacts. KiVa, an anti-bullying program in Finland, was designed around these goals and has received positive evaluations (Salmivalli et al., 2009). Yet, this and other positively-evaluated anti-bullying programs do not focus on bias or discrimination, so implementing explicit attention to raising children's awareness of their role in *prejudicial* bullying is needed (Earnshaw et al., 2018). In addition, future research should investigate whether biased incidents occur in groups more often than nonbiased incidents and assess whether public/group incidents are perceived by victims as more harmful than incidents that occur between victim and perpetrator in a private setting.

From the perspective of general strain theory (Agnew, 1992), another potential explanation for the elevated harms of bias-motivated victimization is that it may be experienced as a more severe or distressing form of strain than nonbiased victimization because it is perceived as more unjust (Agnew, 2001). Psychological research indicates that children's attributions about the cause of their victimization (e.g., jealousy, mutual dislike) affects their

ability to cope with it (Visconti et al., 2013). Agnew (2001) suggests that feelings of injustice – which likely occur following biased victimization – lead to emotions such as anger, which could be more criminogenic than other forms of strain. Although the current study did not examine delinquency as an outcome of biased victimization, this dissertation suggests greater attention to criminal offending following biased victimization is warranted in future research.

Biased victimization might also be more likely than nonbiased victimization to lead to weakened social bonds, as experiencing biased victimization at school (especially when school officials do not step in) could be perceived as the school condoning discriminatory behavior. Unnever & Gabbidon (2011) suggest that Black youth in the United States have difficulty bonding to historically White-dominated institutions such as schools because they perceive that those institutions discriminate against them. This may be the case for other marginalized groups as well, and experiencing biased victimization at school may reinforce these perceptions.

It is also important to keep in mind when considering the implications of this research that biased victimization and its impacts– almost by definition – disproportionately target youth who are minoritized. Whereas some nonbiased bullying perpetrators target youth with high social status to increase the social rewards expected to result (Faris & Felmlee 2014), the perpetrators of biased bullying probably choose youth because they perceive them as stigmatized. Indeed, this is why reducing the effects of selection into biased victimization by improving the similarity of treatment and control groups in analyses of impacts (as was done in Part B) is critical. Even so, it remains possible that some of the greater negative impacts of biased victimization are related to the lower coping resources that these young victims may have resulting from other disadvantages and/or experiences with discrimination. That is, youth with at least one minoritized identity are more likely to experience biased victimization (Bucchianeri et

al., 2013) and also have an increased likelihood of other forms of discrimination or disadvantage associated with the marginalized identity. Minority stress theory (Meyer, 2010) suggests that these harms accumulate. Moreover, some research suggests that socioeconomically upwardly mobile Black and Hispanic individuals in the U.S. are especially likely to experience discrimination (Colen et al., 2018), so additional discrimination adding to the harms of biased victimization may affect minority race/ethnicity youth across the socioeconomic spectrum. Interventions should bear in mind that biased victimization is not likely to be an isolated incident but may be compounded by the effects of broader social disadvantage.

It is clear from the results of both this dissertation (Part A) and prior work (e.g., Mitchell et al., 2020) that youth who experience more than one bias type in prejudicial victimization have increased odds of experiencing negative impacts. In fact, a latent class analysis by Garnett et al. (2014) found that young victims of intersectional discrimination had the highest odds of engaging in deliberate self-harm. Indeed, it was difficult to examine the unique impacts of experiencing any particular bias type (e.g., racial bias) because many youth experienced victimization related to multiple biases. Levin & McDevitt (2002) suggest that bias crime offenders typically do not “specialize,” meaning that, for the most part, they do not victimize any particular social group. They write: “Any group identified as “outsiders” by the dominant culture will serve their purpose—to feel powerful and accepted by their friends” (Levin & Reichelman, 2015: P. 1547). In a similar vein, Wenger & Lantz (2022) find evidence that hate crime committed against Asian Americans *as well as* against other ethnic minorities increased over the pandemic, suggesting that strain leads to a more generalized hate.

These findings imply that the debate regarding which particular characteristics should be included in the definition of biased victimization (and in hate crime law) may not be as important

as thinking about how multiple intersecting identities create a perception of vulnerability, in line with the claims of Chakraborti and Garland (2012). This phenomenon of experiencing multiple biases – and worse impacts related to multiple biases— is not currently represented in legal policy or school programming. If the justification for more severe punishment for perpetrating biased incidents in criminal law rests on evidence that harms to direct and indirect victims are more likely (*Wisconsin v Mitchell*, 1993), then additional harms resulting from multiple biases may be a relevant consideration. Aside from the higher odds of direct victim harm demonstrated herein, if multiple biases are involved, it is likely that there are more indirect victims as well.

However, I found that sexually-biased bullying (measured as sexual comments/teasing) was a very common form of bias-motivated victimization in the HBSC data (81% of biased victims), as was biased victimization related to physical appearance in the NCVS data (29% of victims). Studies that do not measure these biases may be missing common manifestations of the behavior. Notably, these bias types may intersect or overlap with weight-based stigma, which was not measured as a bias type in these datasets but was found to be a risk factor for biased bullying victimization in Study 3 Part A. Gender and/or sexual bias is not protected under all hate crime laws (Mellgren et al., 2021), and sexual teasing among adolescents may be considered normal, expected, or even normative by some school personnel. In addition, a review of stigma-based bullying interventions found that relatively few programs address sex/gender bullying (Earnshaw et al., 2018). As I found that sexually biased bullying is a common form of biased victimization and is associated with the same harms as other forms of biased victimization, my findings imply that it should be taken as seriously as others forms of biased victimization.

Children across gender identity and sexual orientation spectrums may be especially unlikely to report their experiences with biased victimization to authorities, particularly if they

are in a period of pubertal development and do not feel comfortable speaking to adults about the nature of their biased victimization. Underreporting of bias crime is higher in comparison to nonbiased crime among youth (Zaykowski, 2010), probably due to stigma or to the belief that authorities will not be sympathetic. Research finds that there is also a “dark figure” of hate crime (under)reporting for adults (Pezella et al., 2019) as well as among children who attribute victimization to their race (Visconti et al., 2013). It is possible that the underreporting of *sexually* biased victimization is even more likely among adolescents. In short, the high prevalence of sexually biased victimization in the HBSC data implies that teachers should be aware of this form of victimization and its harms, even when it is unreported.

In summary, my findings imply that biased bullying should be given more consideration in research and policy on school bullying. It is well known that a substantial number of youth experience bullying at school each year. The first study of this dissertation demonstrated that about a third of youth who had been bullied believed it was related to bias, and that these victims are likely to experience elevated harms. Thus, schools need to specifically target discrimination in their anti-bullying efforts. For example, drawing from intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954), some programming has used cooperative learning tasks to promote positive relationships between groups of children and changes in prejudicial attitudes (McKown, 2005), an approach that has been applied using media as well (Aboud et al., 2012). As general bullying interventions are most effective for younger youth (Jimenez-Barbero et al., 2016) but the majority of programs to address prejudice are implemented at older ages (Earnshaw et al., 2018), initiatives should be incorporated earlier in schooling and adjusted as developmentally appropriate.

Hate crime jurisprudence reasons that because there are greater harms to both the direct victim and to society more generally from biased crime, greater punishment for the perpetration

of such acts is warranted. However, deterrence of the behavior through punishment is not the necessary implication of my findings. While this dissertation research shows that this greater odds of harm to direct victims is a reality in schools, it does not provide evidence that the appropriate or effective response is discipline. In fact, criminalized social control policies in schools already affect racial/ethnic minorities and disadvantaged groups more often than advantaged groups (Ramey, 2018), and a vast body of research demonstrates that punitive school discipline is associated with negative outcomes, such as dropping out of school (Peguero & Bracy, 2015) and involvement with the criminal justice system (Ramey, 2016). Thus, use of punitive policies for biased aggression in schools may serve to further increase social inequalities, especially because disadvantaged groups perpetrate the behavior as well. Yet, given the immense and potentially rippling harms of biased bullying, it is imperative that some form of discrimination-specific prevention and intervention policies be implemented.

### **Co-occurrence of Biased and Nonbiased Victimization**

#### ***Summary of Findings***

Study 1 demonstrated the importance of biased victimization by providing support for the proposition that impacts on young victims are elevated when the victimization involves bias. Study 2 took a closer look at the context of one particular form of biased victimization (hate speech) by examining its co-occurrence with nonbiased forms of school victimization (general bullying and crime).<sup>2</sup> Although I expected that biased and nonbiased experiences would not cluster within students based on target congruence theory (Finkelhor & Asidigian 1996), I also considered that hate speech might be experienced alongside nonbiased victimization in accordance with the body of work on poly-victimization (Finkelhor et al., 2007). I also examined

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<sup>2</sup> Hates speech victimization was examined because biased bullying was not measured in the NCVS until 2015.



the associations that forms of single-type and poly- victimization – including and not including hate speech – have with students’ fear and place avoidance at school.

The results indicated that experiencing hate speech only was rare (experienced by 2% of youth), whereas experiencing both hate speech and bullying was the most common form of poly-victimization (6% of youth). Victimization by bullying only was much more common than hate speech only or crime only. Regarding the risk of victimization types across student and school characteristics, Black students and “other” race/ethnicity youth were more likely to experience the combination of hate speech and bullying than White and Hispanic youth, and bullying only was experienced most commonly by White youth. School gang and gun presence were strongly associated with all forms of victimization, including hate speech and bullying.

All forms of victimization were associated with higher odds of fear and place avoidance at school than no victimization, aside from crime only. All forms of poly-victimization (e.g., crime and bullying, bullying and hate speech) were associated with higher odds of fear and avoidance than all forms of single-type victimization (e.g., hate speech only), but not differentially depending on whether hate speech was included. On the whole, there were not substantively or statistically significant differences in fear and avoidance between any of the forms of single-type victimization nor between any of the forms of poly-victimization.

### ***Conclusions and Implications***

The finding that students rarely experienced hate speech victimization alone corroborates what was implicitly indicated by Study 1. That is, most youth who experienced any biased bullying victimization also experienced nonbiased bullying victimization. Accordingly, for both parts of Study 1, I coded biased victimization as experienced “any” rather than “only” in order to capture the majority of youth who responded “yes” to the biased bullying victimization indicators.

Similarly, in Study 2, I found that most hate speech victims also experienced bullying. I therefore conclude (from both datasets) that most youth who experience biased victimization also experience nonbiased victimization. At the same time, both datasets also indicated that a majority of the youth who are victimized at school experience nonbiased victimization only (i.e., do not experience biased victimization). Put differently, most school victims experience nonbiased victimization and do not also experience biased victimization. Yet, of the youth who experience biased victimization, most also experience nonbiased victimization.

This finding implies that students who have a high risk of biased victimization also have a high risk of nonbiased victimization, but the reverse is not also true. Given that many youth who experienced hate speech also experienced bullying, Study 2 lends credence to the theory that there are at least some risk factors in common. I will expand upon this finding in Study 3, where I examine the risk factors for both biased and nonbiased victimization. For the moment, however, it is important that biased and nonbiased victimization appear to cluster among youth. Moreover, experiencing both hate speech and bullying was the most common form of poly-victimization among students at school, implying that biased victims may experience poly-victimization more than nonbiased victims. As prior research (Finkelhor et al., 2007) and this dissertation (Study 2) both find that poly-victimization is associated with higher odds of negative impacts (e.g., fear and avoidance) than single-type victimization, hate speech victims may have a high risk of experiencing negative impacts due to the harmful effects of discrimination as well as to the harmful effects of poly-victimization.

That hate speech clusters with nonbiased bullying victimization – but not with crime victimization – implies that reducing bullying may lead to reductions in hate speech, albeit probably smaller reductions than what could be accomplished with programming focusing

explicitly on discriminatory victimization. On the other hand, crime victimization appears to be associated with different risk factors, so interventions for serious violence may not need to focus on bias. Yet, I also found that perceived gun and gang presence at the school, which are risk factors for serious violence, were associated with high rates of all forms of victimization, including hate speech. This finding suggests that school environments that contain disorder and are typically categorized as criminogenic also contain high levels of biased aggression. This finding is consistent with some work which finds that contexts that are conducive to crime generally, such as socially disorganized communities, have high levels of bias-motivated crime as well (Gladfelter et al., 2017). On the whole, this result may indicate that theories of school violence reduction (e.g., communal social organization, Gottfredson et al., 2005) should impact biased victimization as well.

Study 2 did not find that biased victimization in the form of hate speech was associated with more fear and avoidance at school than nonbiased victimization. At first glance, this may appear to contradict the findings of Study 1. However, taken together, these results may indicate that bias experienced *as a component of bullying* is more impactful than nonbiased bullying, whereas bias experienced as hate speech alone is not more impactful than other forms of nonbiased victimization. In other words, because Study 2 measured hate speech compared to other types of experiences, such as bullying and crime, the analyses did not isolate the impacts of the bias. While hate speech was important for fear and avoidance, it is likely that biased incidents are only more impactful than nonbiased incidents when comparison incidents are similar aside from the bias element. For social science research to be conducted appropriately, it is important to compare “like with like” (Firebaugh, 2007). Thus, if a student reported that they were called a bad name related to their race but would not characterize the experience as bullying, then

comparing the incident to nonbiased bullying is analogous to comparing apples to oranges and may lead to dubious conclusions. On the other hand, if two youth reported that they experienced bullying, and one perceived that the bullying victimization was related to bias and the other did not, the comparison is more appropriate because the only difference is the bias. I therefore conclude that, while informative about the extent to which hate speech co-occurs with bullying, I do not interpret the results of Study 2 as conflicting with the results of Study 1.

Pertinent to this point is an important limitation of Study 2: that some of the bullying experienced by youth in this sample could have been related to bias. Because the NCVS only measured hate speech victimization in many of these survey years and did not measure biased bullying until 2015, some of the bullying types that are non-verbal (e.g., excluded you) could have been perceived by the victim as motivated by bias but not accounted for in these data. Thus, Study 2 was not truly able to measure biased and nonbiased victimization separately. Future research on biased victimization should aim to compare incidents that are similar aside from the bias element whenever possible, as the NCVS does in the 2015 survey and onwards.

Study 2 also revealed that hate speech (only as well as with bullying) was experienced by non-White youth more than White youth. Considered in light of prior work (Kurpiel et al., 2022) which indicates that hate speech is important for understanding Black youths' fear at school relative to White youths', it is clear that hate speech is an important risk factor for negative outcomes among non-White youth. As fear and hate speech victimization can interfere with school performance, school attachment, and educational aspirations (Barrett et al., 2012), closing the racial and ethnic achievement gap may require more attention to hate speech victimization.

## **Risk Factors of Biased Victimization and Offending**

### ***Summary of Findings***

Study 2 analyzed several years of NCVS data and revealed that hate speech victimization co-occurs among individuals with general bullying victimization fairly often. Study 3 Part A built on these findings using the HBSC data by assessing the risk factors for biased and nonbiased bullying victimization. My goal was to determine whether there are any risk factors that distinguish youth who are likely to experience any biased victimization from youth who are likely to experience only nonbiased victimization. Another aim was to assess whether biased and nonbiased perpetration are risk factors for biased and nonbiased victimization.

I found that, in comparison to no perpetration, biased and nonbiased bullying perpetration were both associated with biased victimization (in comparison to no victimization and to nonbiased victimization). However, the risk ratios for biased perpetration were significantly larger than the ratios for nonbiased perpetration. In other words, engaging in any form of bullying perpetration – but *especially* biased bullying perpetration – was associated with experiencing biased victimization. Other risk factors associated with biased (vs nonbiased) victimization were being female, not born in the U.S., going to school/bed hungry, and perceiving oneself as under- or over- weight. In addition, the overlap between biased victimization and perpetration was greater for females than males, and especially females who have gone to school/bed hungry or who were not born in the United States. Whereas about 50% of all male biased perpetrators were also biased victims, 77% of female biased perpetrators who were not born in the U.S. were biased victims. Supplemental analyses found that there was a connection between bias types, such that youth who perpetrated sexually biased bullying were more likely to be victimized by sexually biased bullying than non-sexually biased bullying.

Study 3 Part B continued to analyze the risk factors for biased incidents using the HBSC data but analyzed perpetration as the outcome (instead of victimization). This allowed for more direct examination of the perpetrators of biased bullying and assessment of the risk factors *aside from victimization* that are relevant to understanding why students engage in this discriminatory behavior. Based on hate crime theories, I suspected that there might be some unique risk factors for biased (vs nonbiased) perpetration. On the other hand, I expected that risky lifestyle (including delinquency) variables might predict both biased and nonbiased perpetration. The results indicated that male students had higher odds of biased (vs nonbiased) perpetration than females, as did Black and Hispanic (vs White) youth and youth who had carried weapons. Consistent with Part A, biased victimization was associated with biased perpetration.

### ***Conclusions and Implications***

On the whole, Study 3 indicated that experiencing biased bullying victimization is associated with increased risk of perpetrating biased bullying, and vice versa. Based on these findings, I conclude that there is a type-specific, victim-overlap for biased bullying. There are several potential explanations for this finding. First, consistent with most explanations for the victim-perpetrator overlap that are specific to particular behaviors – e.g., the cycle of violence (Widom, 1969) – this finding could reflect the social learning of deviance (Sutherland, 1947). That is, there may be a causal association between victimization and perpetration, such that youth engage in the same behavior that they were exposed to as victims. This mimicry could either be a product of value transference—such that some youth learn and come to believe that prejudicial bullying in an appropriate way to handle conflict—or they may be reacting to behavioral reinforcements in their environment (Akers, 2001). These behavioral reinforcements could be the observed social rewards that other students receive as a result of engaging biased bullying

behavior. In alignment with the “situational peer influence” perspective described in Weerman et al. (2018), delinquent or aggressive behaviors may be transferred in peer groups through decision-making regarding the instantaneous social rewards (relative to the costs) of a behavior.

These interpretations would align with the thrill-seeking explanation for biased aggression put forth by Levin & Reichlemand (2015) and with some of the contentions in Perry (2001), as peer group pressures in each of these frameworks are important for understanding biased aggression. Notably, cross-sectional data were analyzed in this study, so I was not able to discern causal ordering, so explanations that assume the victimization occurred before the perpetration must remain speculative. For instance, youth who perpetrate biased bullying may later experience biased victimization, rather than the reverse. In this scenario, it is unlikely that social learning mechanisms in the form of mimicry explain the overlap.

Another interpretation of this victim-perpetrator overlap relies on cultural explanations, which suggest that the presence of norms about how to react to threats imply the need to defend oneself with similar aggressive behaviors (Berg & Schreck, 2022; Lauritsen & Laub, 2007). Generalizing from cultural accounts of crime such as Andersons (1999)’s “code of the street,” it is possible that there are some schools or communities where norms imply that biased aggression is reacted to with retaliation or discriminatory attacks in return or generally to other students, even if the youth does not actually hold prejudiced beliefs or adhere to norms condoning biased aggression. Cultural explanations for the victim-perpetrator overlap do not assume causal direction as strictly as social learning perspectives.

Research indicates that retaliatory and general toughness norms exist in schools and are associated with school victimization and offending (Moule & Fox, 2020; O & Wilcox, 2020). However, some findings suggest that adhering to retaliatory norms can *reduce* one’s

victimization risk, presumably by indicating target invulnerability, rather than increase it (O & Wilcox, 2020). Other research suggests that risk associated with adherence to such norms is moderated by risky lifestyle (McNeeley & Wilcox, 2015). Based on the results of the current research, it may be that in certain schools, these norms include a bias component. Some social environments could be rewarding for, promotive, or encouraging of identity-based attacks as a form of toughness. This interpretation is consistent with Levin & McDevitt (1993)'s argument that the prejudice harbored by thrill-seeking offenders is relatively superficial, in that many youth engage in biased aggression to adhere to group norms rather than as an act of true beliefs of prejudice (though is not necessarily perceived as such by the victim).

From a policy perspective, the cultural interpretation of the biased bullying victim-perpetrator overlap implies that efforts to change the norms of a school culture surrounding prejudicial bullying, how to respond to it, and the classroom reward structure for these behaviors is critical for reducing biased bullying. As noted in Salmivalli (2010; P. 114): *“if fewer children rewarded and reinforced the bully, and if the group refused to assign high status for those who bully, an important reward for bullying others would be lost.”* In the same vein, some scholars have suggested that encouraging more positive ways to achieve respect among peers (e.g., by emphasizing academic success) could be useful for combatting toughness norms (Gottfredson et al. 2012; O & Wilcox, 2020). Furthermore, as individual-level differences in socio-emotional learning and how youth handle conflict is also a prominent explanation for why some victims become perpetrators whereas others do not (Berg & Felson, 2020; 2016), programs should combat both individual- and school- level norms. Reviews of bullying interventions suggest that multicomponent approaches – which target bullying from different levels and incorporate multiple strategies – have the highest chance of success (Earnshaw, 2018; NASEM, 2016).



That the biased bullying victim-offender overlap was largest for females who were not born in the U.S. and who come from families with low socioeconomic status (SES) – *may* align with explanations for biased aggression that emphasize its use to gain social status. However, unlike these theories, which relate to offending/perpetration, I found that these traits increase likelihood of being *victim-perpetrators* of biased bullying. If the social learning or cultural explanations are accurate, low SES and immigrant youth may be likely to become victim-offenders because they use biased bullying to gain status, as learned in their normative environments. Because these youth have low social status within their network, they may have a high risk of being victimized by biased bullying. In other words, my results may suggest that the biased bullying victim-offender overlap occurs when youth who have low social status in their network attend school in an environment that is promotive of discriminatory bullying and attempt to gain status through engagement in the behavior themselves.

However, these explanations do not fully elucidate why the victim-offender overlap is stronger for females relative to males. It is possible that it has to do with greater relational aggression or bullying among girls. Relational aggression (also called covert, indirect, or social aggression) is intended to inflict harm upon another person through nonphysical and indirect means, typically damaging their social relationships or reputation (e.g., gossip, exclusion). Since its original articulation by Crick & Grotpeter (1995), relational aggression has been viewed as a more feminine form of bullying or “girls just being girls” (Radliff & Joseph, 2011), and research supports the contention that relational aggression is more common among girls than boys (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Brown et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2009). Scholars typically understand this pattern as reflective of gendered cultural roles and norms delineating stereotypical femininity as

passive, caring, and antithetical to more covert forms of aggression. Thus, relational bullying and would be a way to achieve status goals without breaching expectations for feminine behavior.

If biased bullying is used (more often than nonbiased bullying) to gain status or power within a social group (Perry, 2001), and relational bullying involves damaging the victim's reputation, relationships, or status (rather than inflicting direct harm), girls might respond to biased bullying victimization with biased bullying perpetration more often than boys do. Even though bullying literature does not find that females are more likely than males to be bully-victims (Yang & Salmivalli, 2013; Kennedy, 2021), research has not examined gender differences in the risk of being biased bully-victims. In addition, Stotzer et al. (2020) found that (adult) female hate crime offenders more often target friends and family (versus strangers) than men do, so female perpetrators may more often be involved in relational disputes, whereas male perpetration may reflect other conflict dynamics. Moreover, in alignment with feminist frameworks for female aggression that emphasize gendered pathways (e.g., Salisbury & Van Voorhis, 2009), females may engage in biased bullying perpetration for different reasons than males, which may explain gender differences in the propensity to be victim-perpetrators (versus only perpetrators). It is also possible that predominantly female social circles provide greater social rewards for biased bullying than predominantly male circles.

This finding of female involvement in the biased bullying victim-offender overlap could be related to the type of biased bullying that was most common in these data: sexually biased bullying. A qualitative study of biased bullying among late elementary and middle school students suggest that girls' role in gendered and sexualized bullying – as perceived by themselves and by peers – is “spotlighted,” or disproportionately noticed, talked about, and understood in a negative manner (Mischna et al., 2020). Conversely, the author describes boys'

roles as perpetrators or victims of gendered and sexualized bullying as largely “invisible,” finding that students (of any gender) described boys involved as less blameworthy for these incidents. The author suggests that these findings align with what scholars call the “responsibilization of girls,” such that “*Societal norms and narratives position girls and women as responsible for anticipating and managing boys’ and men’s sexual desires (Chambers, Tincknell, & Loon, 2004), and thus as blameworthy when these desires manifest themselves in sexual violence, harassment, or abuse*” (Mischna et al., 2020: P. 417). Accordingly, girls’ involvement in sexual bullying – as either a victim or a perpetrator – may be perceived differently than boys’ involvement. In addition to being victim-perpetrators of biased bullying more often than boys, girls were more likely to be the victims of biased bullying in these data, the majority of which involved some form of sexual bullying. Against the backdrop of research which finds that sexual permissiveness is related to low peer acceptance for girls but not for boys (Kreager & Staff, 2009), it is likely that (perceived or actual) sexual activity in adolescence among females may be judged and reacted to with sexual bullying more often than it is among males.

Another potential explanation for the gender finding regarding the victim-perpetrator overlap is that boys are victimized by sexual bullying as often as girls are but do not interpret the experience as victimization. Bullying and school victimization are subjective experiences, and reactions to sexual activity generally as well as sexual teasing specifically vary across gender and social context (Harding, 2007). To add to the complexity of understanding gender differences in sexual bullying, norms about masculinity and toughness likely suppress the reporting of sexual bullying in surveys for males more than females. Overall, these results suggest that more research on the victim-perpetrator overlap for biased bullying is needed, and that such analyses ought to pay attention to how gender shapes involvement in the behavior.

At the same time, Study 3 Part 2 indicated that, even though the overlap in biased bullying is greater for females, males are more likely to be the perpetrators of biased bullying. That is, although youth who experience both biased perpetration and biased victimization are more likely to be female, the biased perpetrators who do *not* experience victimization are likely to be male. This finding aligns with most prior work on biased crime, which finds that male involvement is more prevalent (Näsi et al., 2016; McDevitt et al, 2001; Ozdemir et al., 2020) and with theoretical perspectives which emphasize that bias crime is used to accomplish normative identity, particularly masculine identity (Bufkin, 1999; Allison & Klein 2019).

Unexpectedly, Study 3 Part B found that Black and Hispanic youth had higher odds of biased perpetration than White youth. Moreover, in contrast to much prior work (e.g., Durkin et al., 2011), Study 3 Part A did *not* find that Black and Hispanic youth had higher odds of biased *victimization* than White youth. One possible explanation for the finding of higher perpetration is that structural and/or non-peer discrimination and strain leads to biased bullying perpetration among non-White youth. Galan et al. (2021) suggests that the trauma resulting from discrimination may lead to externalizing behavior such as violence or bullying others, and highlight how “perceived stigma, minority stress, and systemic disempowerment” factors into conflictual interactions with peers (Galan et al., 2021: P. 8). It could also be that non-White individuals feel powerless in society, so they use biased aggression to gain status, which would align with explanations of hate crime which suggest that minoritized groups use these acts to gain status that they are blocked from obtaining in other ways (McDevitt et al., 2002). Like the findings regarding gender, it important to keep in mind that the most prevalent form of biased bullying in the HBSC data was sexual bullying, so an analysis of biased bullying that only includes racial/ethnic or immigrant bullying may find different results.

Broadly, this finding regarding race/ethnicity – and the finding of female involvement in biased bullying from Part A – indicates that school personnel and intervention programs should be mindful that much biased bullying may not fit the stereotypical scenario of discriminatory aggression. Although hate crime in the United States is typically understood as violence enacted by White, male, perpetrators against non-White victims, this is not always the case. Indeed, Lantz et al. (2017) investigates hate crime reporting for types of incidents that do and do not fit the stereotypical narrative, noting that “the stereotypical hate crime victim is a minority victim” (Lantz et al., 2017 P. 23). They find that White perpetrators who target a minority victim are indeed the most likely to be reported to and arrested by the police. Stereotypes help people identify and understand hate crimes, which affects hate crime reporting. This is likely true for biased bullying as well. Yet, as the current study indicated that biased bullying is perpetrated by females and by racial and ethnic minority youth, child-serving professionals should not limit their efforts to those situations which fit with their pre-conceived notions of discriminatory bullying. Similarly, bullying and biased bullying come in many forms, so intervention efforts should not only focus on the physical, covert forms, but also on more indirect forms as well.

Finally, Study 3 Part B indicated that although biased perpetrators engage in delinquency and risky lifestyles at high rates, such that delinquency is a risk factor for both forms of perpetration, delinquent involvement does not distinguish biased perpetrators from nonbiased perpetrators, aside from weapon carrying. I hypothesized that delinquency and risky lifestyle variables would be *negatively* associated with biased perpetration relative to nonbiased perpetration. However, it became clear from the considerable overlap between biased and nonbiased incidents in these data that such a hypothesis was not likely to be supported. In contrast, weapon carrying was positively associated with biased perpetration.

Certainly, high rates of weapon carrying among biased aggressors is a public health concern, given that guns and other weapons increase the odds of serious injury in conflicts (Wells & Horney, 2002). Some explanations for weapon carrying emphasize carrying for protection or out of fear (Newton & Zimring, 1969; Wilcox et al., 2006). If the perpetrators of biased aggression feel that they have low social status and are a result likely to be victimized, they could carry weapons for protection. Biased aggressors might also be more delinquent overall than nonbiased aggressors, which is indicated by only weapon carrying variable, the most severe form of delinquency measured in these data. Still another possibility is that youth weapon carrying is more common in rural areas – where hunting and protection norms are strong – which may be the same areas where prejudice and biased aggression are more likely to be learned. Future research should prioritize understanding this co-occurrence of weapon carrying and biased bullying, and biased bullying interventions should incorporate focus on whether and how fear and the need to protect oneself factor into perpetrators' behavior.

In summary, Study 3 found that although the lifestyle and delinquency variables predicted both biased and nonbiased bullying perpetration, there are some key risk factors that distinguish biased perpetration. Theoretically, these results imply that scholars should consider that biased bullying perpetrators may have similar traits to nonbiased perpetrators but can still be distinguished by identity characteristics and (potentially) severe delinquent behavior.

### **Future Research**

While informative, the results of this dissertation raise new questions about biased victimization and aggression among youth at school and point scholars towards avenues for future research. First, this dissertation suggests that theoretical frameworks for understanding biased bullying among youth should account for youth who are both perpetrators and victims. Much of the

general criminological literature acknowledges the victim-offender overlap, and the majority of contemporary bullying research examines victim-bullies as a category separate from victims and bullies (Haynie et al., 2001). Yet, focus on victim-offenders of *biased* incidents has been largely absent in research. However, existing theoretical frameworks for biased aggression, such as thrill-seeking (McDevitt et al., 2002) and explanations based on cultural/group norms, would be able to account for this pattern, as would social learning theories (Sutherland, 1947). Notably, the perpetration of bias aggression among youth – especially that which occurs in school – is unique from adult perpetration in that incidents may be more frequently motivated by maintaining social status within a social network, particularly because peer acceptance becomes salient in adolescence (Brown & Larson, 2009; Giordano, 2003). Thus, interventions for biased aggression that focus on youth might be more effective when they target situational, peer group, or classroom dynamics rather than the prejudicial beliefs themselves. Interventions can draw from psychological theory on group influences on behavior (Aronson, 1999) as well as existing anti-bullying programming for youth that has received positive evaluations (Kärnä et al., 2011).

Future research should examine the impacts of biased victimization as well as perpetration and victimization using longitudinal data. Use of longitudinal data strengthens the inference that the impacts are caused by the victimization and allows for examination of directionality of the victim-offender overlap, which would help tease out potential explanations for it (i.e., social learning implies victimization before perpetration). In addition, as it was not clear from this study whether the biased aggression was retaliatory, future network research should investigate the possibility that victims target the same students who bullied them. McDevitt et al.'s (2002) hate crime typology includes retaliation as an offender category, so this research would be theoretically driven.

On the other hand, my findings challenge conceptions of hate crime that are based on defensive offending (e.g., the defensive offender in McDevitt et al. [2002]), wherein high-status groups feel threatened by lower status groups, as I found that females and minority race/ethnicity youth perpetrate biased bullying. These findings are also at odds with Perry (2001)'s conceptualization of hate crime as the victimization of historically marginalized groups by dominant groups in favor of perspectives that advocate for a broader understanding of hate crime (Chakraborti and Garland, 2012). Moreover, my findings suggest that the "mission" offenders in McDevitt et al.'s (2002) typology do not seem to characterize the majority of youthful perpetrators of biased bullying, although future research should consider this possibility more explicitly. Qualitative research or questionnaires that directly question youth about their prejudicial beliefs and whether those prejudicial beliefs motivate the bullying behavior can provide an indication as to whether there are some youth who bully out of true animosity rather than for social performance or peer acceptance (e.g., Ballaschk, Wachs, and Krause, 2021).

The current research also suggests that although concepts in criminological theory that explain aggression may not *uniquely* apply to biased aggression, these concepts do have relevance for understanding biased aggression. In fact, many of the risky lifestyle and delinquency variables were more prevalent among youth who engaged in any biased aggression. Walters (2011) posits that low self-control is a missing link in theorizing about hate crime, and some theory regarding the victim-offender overlap suggests that self-control is key to understanding the phenomenon (Berg & Schreck, 2022). Prior empirical research also suggests that impulsivity and concepts from control theories apply to hate crime offending among youth (Näsi et al., 2016). Researchers should continue to investigate these more traditional criminological variables and their applicability to biased aggression.



School contexts that have high rates of biased victimization had a high rate of nonbiased victimization as well, as school gang and gun presence were associated with both hate speech and general bullying. However, analyses that account for the school context in a more sophisticated manner can ascertain whether some findings uncovered in this study were related to (or vary by) school context. In particular, school and classroom racial and ethnic composition impacts biased aggression (Fisher et al., 2015), so does cross-gender friendships (Faris & Felmlee, 2011), so multilevel analyses that incorporate classroom level information are needed.

On a related note, this research clearly implies that gender is important for involvement in biased aggression and is associated with both the victim-offender overlap for biased bullying as well as the perpetration of biased bullying (in different ways). Accordingly, empirical and theoretical research on biased aggression should continue to investigate and conceptualize how biased offending differs (or does not differ) by gender. Notably, these analyses should not be *limited* to females; such an analysis would assume gender is important for offending rather than revealing the ways in which gender does (and does not) affect involvement (Lantz, 2022). These analyses could include both full-sample analyses and analyses separated by gender to assess whether interventions specific to females (or to males) should be implemented.

Finally, given the high prevalence of experiencing biased victimization related to multiple bias types in these data, as well as the greater odds of negative impacts inflicted as a result, future research should examine the percentage of youth who experience multiple bias types and conduct analyses specifically focused on these youth. Research can examine impacts by combinations of particular bias types (e.g., gender and race) and assess which youth are most likely to experience this victimization and its impacts. Minority stress theory (Meyer, 2010) and intersectionality theories (Crenshaw, 1990) can be used to frame such investigations.

## **Final Remarks**

Bias-motivated peer victimization is a distinct form of adolescent aggression that has the potential to exacerbate the problem of schoolyard bullying by adding the element of discrimination. The goal of this research was to add to understanding of these incidents by analyzing the impacts and predictors of biased victimization and perpetration across two nationally representative datasets. The results revealed that many adolescents who experience biased aggression at school are involved in both victimization and perpetration of the behavior, experience nonbiased incidents as well as biased incidents, and suffer worse health impacts than other types of victims. Perpetrators of biased aggression have an increased risk of carrying weapons and are likely to target youth who may already be facing challenges at school (i.e., immigrant youth, youth from a low SES family). Overall, biased bullying does not appear to always fit the stereotypical model for discriminatory aggression, especially because the roles of victim and perpetrator are more fluid than might be presumed. Finally, biased aggression often involves multiple biases, so intersectional frameworks should be emphasized in future work. School interventions should focus on the how to change the dynamics of and mechanisms for achieving social status in school. Based on prevalence, sexually biased bullying and bullying related to appearance should be investigated more closely, as should the role of gender in all forms of biased bullying. Taken together, these findings underscore the importance of bias-motivation in students' experiences with interpersonal conflict and highlight one avenue by which social inequality is perpetuated and maintained in modern society. Schools are a fundamental arena for the reproduction of disadvantage and inequality across generations, so it is critical that we continually develop and improve the ways in which young people interact with students who are different from them in the classroom.

Table 8-1. Summary of Hypotheses & Findings

	Hypothesis	Supported - Refuted	Conclusion
5-3	<i>Youth who perceive that they have been bullied because of their social characteristics (i.e., the perpetrator was motivated by bias) will be more likely to experience all four types of impacts from the bullying than youth who do not perceive that they were bullied because of their social characteristics.</i>	✓	Biased bullying victimization (relative to nonbiased bullying victimization) was positively associated with all four perceived impacts.
5-4	<i>Experiencing biased victimization involving a greater number of bias types will relate to all four types of perceived negative impacts more strongly than biased victimization involving a fewer number of bias types.</i>	✓	A greater number of bias types was associated with higher odds of experiencing all four of the perceived impacts.
5-7 5-9	<i>Youth who have been victims of biased bullying in the past few months will report greater unwellness in the past week than youth who have been victims of nonbiased bullying and youth who have not been bullied in the past few months.</i>	✓	Biased victimization was associated with a .44 and .19 increase in unwellness relative to no victimization and nonbiased victimization, respectively.
6-1	<i>Hate speech co-occurring with other forms of victimization will be less common than the other forms of victimization co-occurring with each other.</i>	✓	The most common form of poly-victimization in the NCVS was hate speech and bullying, so hate speech does co-occur with other forms of school victimization.
6-3 6-4	<i>Poly-victimization will be associated with fear and avoidance more strongly than single-type victimization.</i>	✓	All forms of poly-victimization were more strongly associated with fear and avoidance than all forms of single-type victimization.
6-3 6-4	<i>Poly-victimization that includes hate speech will be more strongly related to fear and avoidance than poly-victimization that does not include hate speech.</i>	✓	Poly-victimization involving hate speech was not more strongly associated with fear or avoidance than the other forms of poly-victimization.
7-3	<i>Biased bullying perpetration will be positively associated with biased bullying victimization.</i>	✓	Relative to both no victimization and nonbiased victimization, biased perpetration was positively associated with biased bullying victimization.
7-3	<i>The association between biased bullying victimization and perpetration will be stronger than the associations between biased and nonbiased bullying perpetration and victimization.</i>	✓	The relative risk ratio between biased perpetration and victimization was significantly larger than the relative risk ratios between nonbiased perpetration and biased victimization.
7-7	<i>Male gender will be positively associated with biased bullying perpetration relative to nonbiased bullying perpetration.</i>	✓	Males were more likely than females to perpetrate biased (vs nonbiased) bullying.
7-7	<i>Financial hardship in the home will be positively associated with biased bullying perpetration relative to nonbiased bullying perpetration.</i>	✓	The proxy measure of family financial hardship- going to school or bed hungry- was not significantly associated with biased bullying perpetration relative to nonbiased perpetration.
7-7 7-8 7-9	<i>Risky lifestyle and delinquency variables (i.e., nights with friends, low parental monitoring, been in a fight/drank/carried a weapon, friends drink) will be negatively associated with biased bullying perpetration (compared to nonbiased perpetration).</i>	✓	No risky lifestyle variables were negatively associated with biased versus nonbiased perpetration, and weapon carrying was positively associated with biased perpetration.
7-7 7-8 7-9	<i>Any bullying victimization – and especially biased bullying victimization – will be positively associated with biased (versus nonbiased) perpetration.</i>	✓	Bullying victimization - both biased nonbiased- were each positively associated with biased perpetration.

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## APPENDIX

Table A1: Correlation Matrix of Bias Types – Study 1 Part A

	Race	Religion	Ethnicity	Disability	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Appearance
Race	1						
Religion	0.26	1					
Ethnicity	0.55	0.32	1				
Disability	0.11	0.11	0.08	1			
Gender	0.12	0.09	0.12	0.14	1		
Sexual Orientation	0.05	0.06	0.08	0.11	0.28	1	
Appearance	0.11	0.07	0.09	0.16	0.19	0.18	1

**Table A2: Correlation Matrix of Perceived Impacts – Study 1 Part A**

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	Health	Self-Esteem	Relationships	Schoolwork
Health	1			
Self-Esteem	0.33	1		
Relationships	0.36	0.38	1	
Schoolwork	0.39	0.44	0.40	1

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Table A3: Correlation Matrix of Victimization Types – Study 1  
Part A

	Made fun of	Spread rumors	Threatened	Physical	Do things not want	Exclude	Destroy Property
Made fun of	1						
Spread rumors	-0.12	1					
Threatened you	0.15	0.06	1				
Physical	0.12	-0.06	0.30	1			
Do things not want	0.03	0.04	0.12	0.16	1		
Exclude you	0.09	0.12	0.07	0.06	0.13	1	
Destroy Property	0.05	0.06	0.15	0.14	0.14	0.13	1

Table A4: Victimization Types for Nonbiased and Biased Victims Across Bias Types – Study 1 Part A

	Nonbiased	Biased	Race	Religion	Ethnicity	Disability	Gender	Sexual Orien.
	%/Mean(SD)	%/Mean(SD)	%/Mean(SD)	%/Mean(SD)	%/Mean(SD)	%/Mean(SD)	%/Mean(SD)	%/Mean(SD)
Physical	22	29	32	27	29	36	32	33
Rumors	65	68	69	72	68	60	73	93
Made fun of	52	78	77	80	80	83	80	78
Threatened	17	24	26	29	31	26	26	37
Made things not want	7	13	16	13	15	14	20	7
Exclude	21	33	33	41	27	41	38	39
Destroy Property	6	9	12	10	12	14	6	18
Number of victimization types	1.90 (.04)	2.54 (.06)	2.66 (.12)	2.71 (.22)	2.62(.15)	2.72 (.12)	2.77 (.13)	3.04 (.19)

Notes: Percentages indicate whether the student reported experiencing that type of victimization in the past year. Bias types are not mutually exclusive.

Table A5: Sample size and unbalance test of coarsened exact matching.

	Match 1		Match 2	
	Biased (control=none)		Biased (control=nonbiased)	
	Control	Treatment	Control	Treatment
Total samples	5285	3072	2978	3072
Matched samples	5268	3031	2971	3030
Unmatched samples	17	41	7	42
Multiple unbalanced indicators				
Before matching $L_1$	0.224		0.164	
After matching $L_1$	4.161E-15		5.367E-15	

*Notes:* Covariates are matched on gender, race/ethnicity, age, community type, go to school/bed hungry, and not born in the U.S.



Table A6: OLS and CEM Regression Models Predicting Unwellness for Biased Bullying Victims and Nonvictims with School Fixed Effects- Study 1 Part B

	OLS		CEM	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Bullying Victimization				
Biased (ref=nonvictim)	0.53*** (0.02)	0.43*** (0.02)	0.44*** (0.02)	0.42*** (0.02)
Female		0.18*** (0.02)		0.18*** (0.02)
Age		0.05*** (0.01)		0.05*** (0.01)
Race/Ethnicity (ref=White)				
Black		-0.00 (0.03)		-0.01 (0.03)
Hispanic		-0.01 (0.03)		-0.01 (0.03)
Two + ethnicities		0.09** (0.03)		0.10*** (0.03)
Asian		-0.02 (0.04)		-0.03 (0.04)
Other race/ethnicity		0.04 (0.03)		0.03 (0.04)
Community type (ref=suburban)				
Unclassified		-0.09 (0.16)		-0.18 (0.16)
Urban		-0.08 (0.18)		-0.05 (0.17)
Rural		-0.12 (0.15)		-0.16 (0.15)
Go to bed/school hungry (ref=never)				
Sometimes		0.32*** (0.02)		0.32*** (0.02)
Often		0.62*** (0.04)		0.64*** (0.04)
Always		0.81*** (0.06)		0.80*** (0.05)
Not born US		0.05 (0.03)		0.04 (0.03)
Constant	1.96***	1.51***	2.04***	1.45***

**Table A6:** OLS and CEM Regression Models Predicting Unwellness for Biased Bullying Victims and Nonvictims with School Fixed Effects (Continued)

	(0.01)	(0.18)	(0.01)	(0.18)
School Fixed effects (not shown)				
Observations	8,502	8,502	8,299	8,299
R-squared	0.12	0.26	0.08	0.25

Notes: \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05

OLS regressions adjusted for the complex survey design using SVYSET IN STATA.

95% confidence interval below estimate.

Table A7: OLS and CEM Regression Models Predicting Unwellness for Biased and Nonbiased Bullying Victims with School Fixed Effects - Study 1 Part B

	OLS		CEM	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
<b>Bullying Victimization</b>				
Biased (ref=nonbiased)	0.28*** (0.02)	0.22*** (0.02)	0.21*** (0.02)	0.19*** (0.02)
Female		0.18*** (0.03)		0.19*** (0.02)
Age		0.01 (0.02)		0.04** (0.01)
<b>Race/Ethnicity (ref=White)</b>				
Black		-0.02 (0.05)		-0.01 (0.03)
Hispanic		-0.00 (0.03)		-0.01 (0.03)
Two + ethnicities		0.06 (0.03)		0.02 (0.04)
Asian		-0.06 (0.07)		-0.06 (0.05)
Other race/ethnicity		-0.01 (0.05)		-0.04 (0.04)
<b>Community type (ref=rural)</b>				
Unclassified		-0.05*** (0.01)		0.04 (0.20)
Urban		0.04 (0.02)		-0.13 (0.22)
Rural		-0.21*** (0.01)		-0.25 (0.19)
<b>Go to bed/school hungry (ref=never)</b>				
Sometimes		0.29*** (0.03)		0.30*** (0.02)
Often		0.60*** (0.05)		0.60*** (0.04)
Always		0.59*** (0.10)		0.66*** (0.06)
Not born US		0.04 (0.04)		0.06 (0.03)
Constant	2.20***	2.19***	2.28***	1.87***

Table A7: OLS and CEM Regression Models Predicting Unwellness for Biased and Nonbiased Bullying Victims with School Fixed Effects (Continued)

	(0.02)	(0.26)	(0.01)	(0.22)
School fixed effects (not shown)				
Observations	6,050	6,050	6,001	6,001
R-squared	0.04	0.21	0.02	0.20

Notes: \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05

OLS regressions adjusted for the complex survey design using SVTSET in STATA.

Table A8: OLS and CEM Regression Models Predicting Unwellness for Biased Bullying Victims and Nonvictims: Bullying Defined as at least 2 or 3 times a Month - Study 1 Part B

	Panel A: OLS		Panel B: CEM	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Bullying Victimization				
Biased				
(ref=nonvictim)	0.64***	0.53***	0.52***	0.49***
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Female		0.19***		0.20***
		(0.02)		(0.01)
Age		0.07***		0.08***
		(0.01)		(0.00)
Race/ethnicity (ref=White)				
Black		-0.04		0.03
		(0.03)		(0.02)
Hispanic		0.05		0.02
		(0.02)		(0.02)
Two + ethnicities		0.08*		0.11***
		(0.03)		(0.03)
Asian		0.07		0.03
		(0.05)		(0.04)
Other race/ethnicity		0.04		0.05
		(0.04)		(0.03)
Community Type (ref=suburban)				
Unclassified		0.04		0.07*
		(0.07)		(0.03)
Urban		0.00		0.03
		(0.02)		(0.02)
Rural		-0.00		0.01
		(0.03)		(0.02)
Go to bed/school hungry (ref=never)				
Sometimes		0.33***		0.34***
		(0.02)		(0.02)
Often		0.62***		0.66***
		(0.06)		(0.03)
Always		0.81***		0.99***
		(0.09)		(0.04)
Not born in the U.S.		0.02		0.06*
		(0.04)		(0.02)
Constant	1.99***	0.87***	2.11***	0.74***
	(0.01)	(0.07)	(0.01)	(0.06)
Observations	8,673	8,673	8,577	8,577
R-squared	0.11	0.22	0.07	0.22

Notes: \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05

OLS regressions are adjusted for the complex survey design using SVYSET in STATA.

Table A9: OLS and CEM Regression Models Predicting Unwellness for Biased and Nonbiased Bullying Victims: Bullying Defined as at least 2 or 3 times a Month - Study 1 Part B

	Panel A: OLS		Panel B: CEM	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Bullying Victimization				
Biased				
(ref=nonbiased)	0.32***	0.26***	0.25***	0.23***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Female		0.21***		0.22***
		(0.03)		(0.02)
Age		0.06***		0.07***
		(0.01)		(0.01)
Race/ethnicity (ref=White)				
Black		-0.04		-0.03
		(0.05)		(0.03)
Hispanic		-0.01		-0.04
		(0.04)		(0.03)
Two + ethnicities		0.08		0.08
		(0.04)		(0.04)
Asian		-0.08		-0.06
		(0.07)		(0.06)
Other race/ethnicity		-0.05		-0.04
		(0.07)		(0.05)
Community Type (ref=suburban)				
Unclassified		0.06		0.02
		(0.06)		(0.05)
Urban		-0.03		-0.02
		(0.04)		(0.03)
Rural		-0.04		-0.04
		(0.04)		(0.03)
Go to bed/school hungry (ref=never)				
Sometimes		0.31***		0.32***
		(0.03)		(0.02)
Often		0.59***		0.62***
		(0.06)		(0.04)
Always		0.54***		0.59***
		(0.12)		(0.07)
Not born in the U.S.		0.05		0.10**
		(0.05)		(0.04)
Constant	2.31***	1.31***	2.38***	1.19***
	(0.02)	(0.11)	(0.01)	(0.09)
Observations	4,160	4,160	4,112	4,112
R-squared	0.04	0.14	0.02	0.14

Notes: \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05

OLS regressions are adjusted for the complex survey design using SVYSET.

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**Kurpiel, A.** 2023. "Biased and Nonbiased Victimization at School: Perceived Impacts among Victimized Youth in a National Sample." *Journal of School Violence*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2023.2272133>

**Kurpiel, A.** 2023. "Biased Bullying Victimization and Student Wellbeing: Evidence from a Coarsened Exact Matching Analysis." *Crime & Delinquency*.  
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**Kurpiel, A., & Albanese, A.** 2023. "The Noncitizen Penalty in U.S. Federal Courts: Differences in Punishment by Region of Citizenship." *Sociological Perspectives*.  
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**Kurpiel, A., Hullenaar, K. L., & Ruback, R. B.** 2022. "Racial & Ethnic Differences in The Fear-Victimization Gap at School: An Examination of School Context and Trends Over Time." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 38: 2534–2565. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605221101196>.

Hullenaar, K. L., **Kurpiel, A., & Ruback, R. B.** 2021. "Juvenile Violent Offending in School and Out: Reporting, Arrest, and the School-To-Prison Pipeline." *Justice Quarterly*. 38: 1319-1341.  
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