Effects of parental Gender-Based Attitudes Impacts on School-Age Bullying.

BY

JODI M. DUNN

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Sociology in the Department of Sociology, Social Work, & Criminal
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M. Candace Christensen
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RE: Your application dated 4/19/2013 regarding study number 3910: Gender-based violence prevention: What are parents teaching their children?

Dear Dr. Christensen:

Thank you for your response to requests from a prior review of your application for the new study listed above.

You are granted permission to conduct your study as most recently described effective immediately. The study is subject to continuing review on or before 4/23/2014, unless closed before that date.

Notify the HSC of any adverse events. Serious, unexpected adverse events must be reported in writing within 10 business days.

Submit progress reports on your project in six months. You should report how many subjects have participated in the project and verify that you are following the methods and procedures outlined in your approved protocol. Then, report to the Human Subjects Committee when your project has been completed. Reporting forms are available on-line.

Please note that any changes to the study as approved must be promptly reported and approved. Some changes may be approved by expedited review; others require full board review. Contact Patricia Hunter (208-282-2179; fax 208-282-4723; email: humsubj@isu.edu) if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Ralph Baergen, PhD, MPH, CIP
Human Subjects Chair

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Throughout the process of writing my thesis there were many times that I felt I had reached my limits, and that I never thought would be possible. Since I thought I had already challenged myself through my service in the United States Army. I can say now that both of these experiences were challenging in different ways, but each has helped me grow into the person I am today.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore how parents in Southeast Idaho, Salt Lake City, Utah, and Seattle, Washington areas, discuss and explore experiences in regard to bullying with their young children. The study used phenomenological research methods for data gathering and analysis. Queer theory was employed throughout the data analysis. The participants included 13 parents (mothers and fathers) who had at least one child between the ages of three and eleven years old. The researcher performed semi-structured, individual interviews. These themes emerged from the data analysis: gender traditionalism, individuality, and bullying preparation. These findings illustrated there is relationship between parental perceptions of gender, and how that may influence how parents discuss or not discuss youth bullying with their children.

Chapter 1: Introduction

      Bullying is a problem that affects millions of students of all ages, races, and classes. Bullying is a complex phenomenon that comes with its own stigmas, such as 1) a child being labeled a bully, 2) the bullying of a child, and 3) the indirect effects of bullying on parents, teachers, and bystanders. The forces that shape this phenomenon of bullying are identified as socialization, cultural beliefs, values, and social norms (Hong & Espelage, 2012; Juvonen & Galvan, 2008; Pascoe, 2013; Perkins, Craig, & Perkins, 2011). One way in which these forces reach both the children being bullied and "the bully" is through parental influences. To better understand this phenomenon, it is essential to take a closer look at parental definitions and to understand the language of bullying, as well as how these messages are conveyed to children through conversation, to better prepare children for the issue of bullying (Fulcher et al.,2008).

      Preparing children for bullying is important. Research shows such preparation helps manage and reduce bullying. However, there has been little research done on how parental preparation ties in to managing and reducing bullying. Current and past research focuses primarily on how parents react upon discovering their child is a victim of bullying, how attachment styles and/or parenting styles contribute to a child's being victimized or becoming a bully, and how parents hesitate or are unsure of how to define and identify bullying (Baldry & Farrington, 2000; Kaufmann et al., 2000; Ladd & Kochenderfer Ladd, 1998; Smith & Myron-Wilson, 1998; Troy & Sroufe, 1987; Sawyer, Faye, Pepler, & Wiener, 2011). Other research has emphasized the perspectives of teachers (Bernstein & Watson, 1997; Borg, 1998; Boulton, 1997; Flaspohler, Elfstrom, Vanderzee, Sink, & Birchmeier, 2009; Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, & Wiener, 2005). It should be noted that aside from parents' roles, teachers who have a great deal of knowledge and/or concern about bullying put forth the greatest amount of effort into prevention, management, and intervention in bullying incidents (Beran, 2005; Hanie et al., 2001; Kallestad, Helge, & Olweus, 2003).

Bullying incidents have and are expanding and being directed toward children whose gender expression challenges society's sex role expectations and who are particularly targeted for bullying (Higdon, 2011; Crick, 1997). Throughout this paper I explore the ties between bullying and gender expectations of children, and how individuality challenges society's gender role expectations, as those expressing non-normative/conforming gender expressions are particularly targeted for bullying. I posit that bullying acts as a policing effort of these children that urges them toward gender conformity as a means of survival. Social constructions of ideal masculinity and femininity are at the core of much bullying behavior. Thus, these bullies are reinforcing expected cultural norms for boys and girls by punishing children who do not fit the ideal of traditional (heterosexual) gender roles (Meyer, 2009; Higdon, 2011).

By taking a more rigorous approach to the examination of parental perceptions and understanding in relation to gender and bullying, I anticipate finding that attitudes toward individuality may assist in explaining a connection between gender and bullying. Additionally, I expect that parents who are accepting of non-normative/conforming gender expressions actively process concepts associated with bullying with their children. We do not know if these parents teach their children to stand up to bullying, but my assumption is that they do discuss bullying proactively with their children.

The purpose of this study is to explore how parents (in Southeast Idaho, Salt Lake City, Utah, and Seattle, Washington areas) understand and process bullying with their young children. In this research study I used thirteen semi-structured interviews of parents with children between the ages of three and eleven. This age range was chosen to provide insight into gender variances during early socialization. Throughout this study I utilize queer theory and grounded theory for data analysis.

In this thesis, I investigate connections between the parents' messages to children about gender and parents' preparation of their children for the potential of bullying. My research

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question is "Do parents' messages to children about gender relate to the preparation they give their children about bullying?" Some research has partially addressed this question by showing that: 1) parents' definition and understanding of bullying may affect their ability to respond effectively and appropriately, as well as whether they are able to recognize signs of bullying; and 2) parents who do not perceive aggressive actions as bullying have children who are less likely to disclose victimization because this perception will not be listened to or validated (Troy & Sroufe, 1987; Ladd & Kochenderfer Ladd, 1998; Smith & Myron-Wilson, 1998; Baldry & Farrington, 2000; Kaufmann et al., 2000; Sawyer et al., 2011). The topic of bullying and parental preparation is important to me for many reasons, one being that bullying can have long-term consequences on children, as they are at heightened risk of depression and anxiety. Additionally, there is a negative impact on victims of bullying in forming healthy emotional relationships with others (Higdon, 2011). Second, I find importance in the role of the parents—there must be a way for parents to be knowledgeable of their power and their roles in proactively impacting bullying. As previously stated, teachers have been shown to have great impact on bullying prevention. The proactive impact parents can have on bullying is by being aware of their definition of gender and how that impacts the use of language they use to talk with their children, and that can also influence the type of language used to discuss sensitive issues such as bullying with their children

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Bullying is not an unfamiliar issue to parents or schools. However, the dynamics of bullying have shifted and, in recent years, there has been growing concern about bullying aimed at children who are expressing gender in a variety of ways at young ages. This means bullying is being directed at children who do not express gender norms based on the ideals of male and female that children are made aware of at a young age. The literature with regard to bullying continues to grow, but there seems to be a gap in research with an emphasis on understanding how parents' concepts of gender and bullying impact how their young children navigate how to

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handle bullying incidents. Bullying behaviors affect everyone. Decreasing bullying among young children will not only benefit the individual, but possibly create social change in building an understanding about bullying in parents and youth that will act as a strong force to prevent bullying in all forms and at all stages of life.

In recent years parents and children have looked for guidance and/or resolution to bullying within major level institutions such as government and school policies—I assert that, although these policies are helpful, there could be added benefit to addressing bullying at the micro level of parents and parenting styles. There is a need to recognize that parents have a crucial role in decreasing bullying, and this is not just by trying to provide help to a young child currently living in an unhealthy home environment. There are multiple aspects of parental influence on bullying that need to be taken into consideration to create social change among various social institutions in regard to bullying by the initial driving force stemming from parental acceptance of all notions of gender not just societal ideals of gender (Friedman, Kay, Leaper, Campbell, & Bigler, 2007).

To better understand parental influences, it is beneficial to explore what exactly bullying is, how it is defined, and what it might look like in the lives of children. "Bullying" has been defined in a multitude of ways. Research on bullying suggests that, broadly defined, bullying involves intentional, repetitive negative and aggressive acts of physical (e.g., punching, tripping), verbal (e.g., threats, insults), psychological or social (e.g., social exclusion or isolation, spreading gossip) behaviors, or cyber-bullying, (bullying through the use of electronic communication devices (e.g. cellphones or a computer), where the two parties involved do not hold equal power and where the perpetrator's intent is to do harm or humiliate the victim (Miller, 2006; Craig et al., 2007; Rigby, 2008; Harcourt, Jasperse, & Green, 2014). According to this definition, an individual is a victim of bullying when he or she is exposed repeatedly over time to negative actions by one or more individuals and is unable to defend him or herself, excluding cases where

two children of similar physical and psychological strength are fighting (CDC 2014). Olweus (1993) provides a more concrete definition that can be applied within educational institutions, "a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students."

Bullying is a complex phenomenon involving the interaction of individuals, their families, schools, and wider communities (Mishna, Pepler, & Wiener, 2006). The majority of bullying research has focused on students, teachers, and other school staff (e.g., principals, counselors), and parental perspectives were further explored upon being informed his/her children were bullied while at school (Olweus, 1993).

Research shows bullying preparation can help manage and reduce bullying (Olweus, 1993). However, there has been little research done on how parental preparation ties into managing and reducing bullying. Research has focused primarily on how parents react when they discover their child is a victim of bullying, how attachment styles and/or parenting styles contribute to a child's victimization or becoming a bully, and how parents tend to hesitate with regard to defining and identifying bullying; leaving feelings of uncertainty in how to address bullying with their children (Baldry & Farrington 2000; Kaufmann et al., 2000; Ladd & Kochenderfer Ladd, 1998; Smith & Myron-Wilson, 1998; Troy & Sroufe, 1987; Sawyer, Faye, Pepler, & Wiener, 2011).

Bullying incidents are expanding and children whose gender expression challenges society's sex role expectations are particularly targeted for bullying (Higdon, 2011). Also, non-normative gender expression or gender non-conforming has been frequently cited as a source of childhood bullying (Crick, 1997). Social constructions of ideal masculinity and femininity are at the core of much bullying behavior. Thus, bullies are reinforcing expected cultural norms for boys and girls by punishing children who do not fit the ideal of traditional (heterosexual) gender roles (Meyer, 2009; Higdon, 2011).

Imagine yourself as a parent whose son comes home upset, on the verge of tears, and tells you about how some boy at school was teasing him for being in choir rather than being in band where he can play a more "manly" instrument such as the drums or guitar. Some initial thoughts run through your mind before addressing the situation. You think to yourself, *well, my friends and I used to do this to other kids and nothing bad happened then*. So you chalk it as kids being kids or just a game of name calling, with no harm done, and if something does happen the school will intervene in the situation before anything physical occurs. Or imagine you get a phone a phone call from your daughter's school informing you that she was involved in a physical altercation with a male student. You leave work immediately to go to school to get all the information concerning the situation, since you believe your child is a good kid, and wouldn't just start a fight for no reason. Your daughter tells you that this isn't the first time the situation has occurred and that it started out weeks ago. The first time it happened, the male student was pushing her friend up against the wall, while laughing about it. She and her friend went to a teacher to report what was going on, and the teacher did nothing but tell the two girls to play on a different side of the playground to avoid the male student. Then sometime after, the same male student started pushing her friend against the wall and saying all of these gross (sexual) comments to her. She then tells you that, rather than telling a teacher, she decided to push the male student away from her friend and that she told him she saw him pushing or saying anything to her friend again, she was going to do something about it. And that led up to this very moment of your being in the principal's office at your daughter's school, having the principal tell you that what she did is bullying. You ask if anything was going to happen to the male student and the principal simply replies "No, since no teachers saw or reported the incidents." A few weeks go by without incident, then all of a sudden you receive another call from the school principal informing you that there has been another incident. You drive to the school to find out that your daughter is being written up again, based on bullying, but this time it is based on her making a

comment about a male student dancing around, whom she then called gay. As a parent, you decide it is time to address the topic of bullying since the school is handling it based on its policy/policies in a manner that doesn't seem appropriate. But how do you discuss what bullying is with your child when you're not even sure if he/she will understand?

These examples reflect some common attitudes or approaches parents take when it comes to bullying, in relation to their children, but is this the approach to bullying that parents should be taking into consideration? Young children all across the world are experiencing bullying, and there are various school policies on how to recognize and stop bullying. Those school policies don't seem to be decreasing bullying, however, but rather are increasing bullying. So one thought you might be having is, "What are we missing?"

As stated previously, research has shown that the missing component to reducing bullying is parents prior to the incident occurring or, more specifically, parents' own concepts of what they consider bullying, and communication or lack of communication about bullying (Sawyer, Faye, Pepler, & Wiener, 2011). In addition, the closeness of relationships and levels of punishment and conflict in the home also affect children's involvement in bullying (Stevens & Bourdeaudhuij, 2002), while strong family support predicts positive adjustment and resiliency in bullied children (Bowes, Maughan, Caspi, Moffitt, & Arseneault, 2010). Maternal warmth and a positive home environment predict fewer emotional and behavioral problems in children who had been bullied, compared to those who have not been bullied (Bowes et al., 2010). Similarly, bullied students who perceive high levels of support from their parents show fewer and less extreme depressive symptoms (Conners- Burrow & Johnson, 2009).

In order to start this dialogue, parents first have to be aware of their understandings and meanings of what bullying is. Based on these factors, parents can begin to see how they directly or indirectly perpetuate or decrease bullying and, from there, they can feel more empowered to take a proactive approach to bullying. From here, parents can maintain their language about what

bullying is and how they communicate or don't communicate to their child/children about bullying.

There is no rule book or playbook that gives you the rules of how to address difficult topics such as bullying with your child or children, or when it is age-appropriate to do so. The decision to address bullying with children weighs heavily on parents, especially age appropriateness that will allow a child or children to understand what bullying is and the complexities of bullying. This has created a disconnect between parents and understanding their influences on bullying based on how parents define and understand two components of bullying; gender and components of bullying. Parents' definition and understanding impact their own responses to bullying when their child or children experience issues with bullying, and if or when they recognize bullying itself.

Parents play a substantial role in encouraging or reducing bullying behaviors at home. In previous research, young children who receive positive messages about fighting such as, if a kid hits you, hit them back, respond with bullying behavior. Conversely, teaching young children messages to work through conflicts using nonviolent strategies significantly reduces the potential for bullying behaviors (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000).

While parents don't aim to teach their children bullying behaviors, there are several ways they may indirectly teach their children to bully. In order to clearly understand how parents can influence or see their impact on bullying, several things need to be considered. First, what needs to be discussed are two unique parenting styles that come with different perspectives on how young children are viewed, differences in definitions, understanding, and meaning of concepts, especially bullying. With these differences in parenting styles we can clearly see how one can perpetuate bullying while the latter can reduce bullying. The two parenting styles and their impacts that will be discussed in this research: traditional and individualistic (gender-neutral) parenting styles.

1. Traditional parenting style is defined as the acceptance of homophobic language, cultural ideals of "maleness" and "femaleness," and the use of gendered language. Homophobic language includes pejorative statements, negative references toward, or epithets ascribed to sexual minorities, and it is the most common form of discrimination experienced by LGBTQ+ youth. Also at issue is the seriousness of this language, yet often classifying it as humor while denying it is an intentional expression of prejudice on their part (Poteat & Digiovanni, 2010). Traditional parenting styles take on the attitude of "kids will be kids."

2. Individualistic (Gender-neutral) parenting style is defined as the acceptance of gender-variances in reference to maleness and femaleness, i.e. the use all-inclusive language to reduce bullying. Individualistic (Gender-neutral) parenting style is still in the exploratory stages, but advocates for parents to encourage their children to move beyond cultural ideals of "maleness" and "femaleness," and focusing more on gender neutrality (Martin, 2005).

Martin (2005) and Patterson (2006) acknowledge that a major issue with gender-neutral parenting that it hasn't been fully addressed is how sexuality is developed in a nonsexist family, but current research suggests that qualities of family relationships are more tightly linked with child outcomes than is parental sexual orientation. A salient strength in Martin's article is recognizing that gender-neutral parenting has the advantage of helping parents and children adopt and promote desirable human traits and values, and allowing children the opportunity to build on their inherent strengths. Along with these basic principles, individualistic (gender-neutral) parenting helps in enhancing relationships between males and females across their life cycles. Also, individualistic (gender-neutral) parenting recognizes the use of language as a powerful tool that can influence social change(s). By changing the language we use to discuss various topics such as bullying, we can begin to create social change in relation to youth bullying. Parents using language that honors their children individually can contribute to institutions by socializing boys and girls to think for themselves as equals (Martin 2005).

Other research has emphasized the perspectives of teachers (Bernstein & Watson, 1997; Borg, 1998; Boulton, 1997; Flaspohler, Elfstrom, Vanderzee, Sink, & Birchmeier, 2009; Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, & Wiener, 2005). Research has found that teachers who have a great deal of knowledge and/or concern about bullying put forth the greatest amount of effort in prevention, management, and intervention in bullying incidents (Kallestad, Helge, & Olweus, 2003; Beran, 2005). In addition, research indicates that there are two common types of bullying that occur. The first type is direct, physical aggression or attacks toward school victims. This type of bullying typically receives the most attention from school staff, due to its overt nature. Some schools have zero tolerance policies for violent behaviors, placing high priority on physical bullying over other forms of bullying (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007). The second type is indirect bullying, where no physical violence occurs. Indirect bullying often involves verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors such as name-calling, blackmailing, making threats, excluding others, and spreading rumors (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007). Concerns with bullying continue to be addressed within laws and policies to address both types of bullying. Through laws (in state education codes) and model policies (that provide guidance to districts and schools), each state addresses bullying differently. Examples of these state differences in addressing bullying can be represented through the three states in which the interviews for this research were conducted (Idaho, Utah, and Washington State). All three states included in their laws and policies a range of bullying acts; effects of bullying on students (e.g. school safety, school environment, and student learning); any level of bullying is deemed unacceptable, and that every incident is to be taken seriously by school administrators, school staff (e.g. teachers), students, and students' families; and a series of graduated consequences for any student(s) who commit any of the acts denoted as bullying. Punishments conform to federal and state disability and anti-discrimination laws and policies. A notable difference in bullying laws and policies between these three states is that Washington State has a specified groups section (e.g.

race/ethnicity, religion, gender, etc.) under its laws and policies in regard to bullying, whereas Idaho and Utah do not include specified groups that could be considered at high risk of bullying (Washington State Legislature, 2011; Legislature of the State of Idaho, 2015; Utah State Legislature, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used for this study revolves around the use of Queer theory. Within queer theory, the word "queer" is used an umbrella term for a coalition of culturally marginal sexual self-identifications and at other times describes a theoretical model that developed from lesbian and gay studies traditionally rather than slang for a homosexual that goes along with homophobia. Queer theory developed out of what was traditionally women's studies and lesbian and gay studies. Queer theory builds upon feminist challenges to the idea that gender is part of the essential self and upon gay and lesbian studies' close examination of the socially constructed nature of sexual acts and identities. During the 1990s, AIDS activism, gay liberation, nationally and internationally, was being organized around the analysis of lesbian and gay oppression and how that oppression can be overcome (Berlant & Warner, 1995; Jagose, 1996). During this time homosexuality was represented by power structures that were focused on sexual reproduction and the patriarchal nuclear family. These dominant views of sex and gender categories and the institutions that supported them could be undermined by gay men and lesbians that refused to accept their lower status, and this would be done through literal and symbolic acts of violence. In order to liberate homosexuality, gay liberation was/is committed to discrediting the current fixed notions of femininity and masculinity, and this in return would be able to liberate all oppressed groups by the critic of normative sex and gender roles. The gay liberation and lesbian feminist models of liberation are setup to transform the oppressive social structures by representing same-sex practices as legitimate. Along with this these models discuss gender and sexuality as being fluid (Jagose, 1996).

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Since the term "queer" is not a stable category, it can be understood as a more fluid relationship to gender, and adapt as other categories and definitions changes (Berlant & Warner, 1995; Jagose, 1996). "Queer" can be seen as that which is incomprehensible to the norm, which creates the possibility to develop resistance strategies against dominant heterosexual norms. Queer theory has been able to call into question the normative categories of sex, gender, and sexuality. Queer theory's impact on politics involving identity has yet to be determined. Its dissatisfaction of homogeneous identity categories and totalizing explanatory narratives necessarily limits its own claims. It does not offer itself as some new and improved version of lesbian and gay but rather as something that questions the assumption that those descriptors are self-evident. Queer theory allows for more identities to be included within social movements and identity politics, and without there being explicit definition of queer allows it to transform itself as necessary with cultural and definitional changes allowing it to continually question stable categories within any context (Jagose, 1996). Queer theory destabilizes categories such as sexes, gender, and sexualities. Additionally, queer theory focuses on the mismatches between these stable categories with heterosexuality being the origin. The purpose of queer theory is to examine discourses around gender and sexuality that have developed within the last century, and to develop more radical methods to challenge dominant notions of heteronormativity (Jagose, 1996).

In addition, queer theory asserts that activities and identities are shaped through social interaction(s) that fall into normative and/or deviant categories, and the recognition that these categories are socially constructed, which creates specific types of social meaning(s). Queer theory encompasses diverse practices that study the relationships between sex, gender, and sexual desire. It challenges hegemonic masculinity, the ideas of totalizing identities (e.g. that a person is gay, and therefore, there is a "gay" quality about him), and seeks to disassemble binary constructs (e.g. those who identify as transgender). The word "queer" expresses a disruption of the norm, which is a key theme of what queer theory embodies. *In Bodies That Matter,* Butler argued that

bodies take shape in response to norms, and that the process of materializing and reproducing norms can also change norms (1993). Similarly, biologist Anne Fausto-Sterling defines sexuality as "a somatic fact created by a cultural effect." Thus resulting into a question that if culture can create somatic facts, she asks, can culture also change them (2000). Butler (1993) explains how gender assumptions influence notions of sexuality; she challenged the power of sex and gender norms by defining norms as vulnerable to subversion and by showing that norms depend on what they exclude, since heterosexuality at its most normative is organized around homosexuality.

Butler (1990) explains that normative and/or deviant categories are subjective and fluid, and that an individual is never exclusively "normative" or "deviant," rather, he/she is always in contextual-dependent flux. In other words, Butler acknowledges that as human beings we don't always identify ourselves as concrete beings, and our gender performance/identity is continually evolving. One can move back and forth anywhere they decide to without having to give up one self over the other. "Performativity" allows for more variation in gender performances/identities by using fluidity or a spectrum of gender performances, and there is also recognition that gender performances are continually evolving over time. This concept challenges society's categories of individuals (Appelrouth & Desfor Edles, 2011). Queer theory can further our understanding of youth bullying based on the need for an individual to continually put forth an acceptable gendered performance that "fits" into his/her peers' performance, thus recognizing that gender is a persistent impersonation that passes as real (Appelrouth & Desfor Edles, 2011; Butler, 1990; Butler, 1993). In addition, queer theory emphasizes the idea that identities are not fixed and do not determine who we are as individuals.

Queer theory employed in this study can help provide a better understanding/explanation of how parental definitions or conceptualizations of gender can impact the discussion of youth bullying with his/her children. Also, Queer Theory can provide opportunities to deconstruct normative and/or deviant categories in relation to gender and other identities, or invite

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opportunities for children to explore their individualism at an earlier age, with being able to manage bullying incidents within social contexts.

Chapter 3: Data and Methodology

To address this research question, I analyzed 13 interviews in which parents with children between the ages of three and eleven were asked about what they had taught their children about gender messages and bullying. The sample was composed of five men and eight women; four parents who identify as non-white; nine parents who identify as white, all the parents have attended at least some college, and most have an annual household income above $50,000. (see Table 1). Also, each parent lived in one of three cities in the northwestern U.S. and, at the time of the interview each had at least one child between the ages of three and eleven years of age (M = 6.75 years). Given that the sample was comprised of 13 parents, generalizations should not be made about the findings.

This data has already been collected and used as part of two other studies. A semi-structured individual interview process was used, with the intention of allowing the parents to freely share their understanding and experience of processing gender and bullying-related concepts. The questions were prepared prior to the interviews, but the interviewer was able to freely probe for further information. This allowed for a thorough and deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied, given that the parents were encouraged to tell stories and provide examples within the interview process. The interviews were conducted in a parent's home, in the researcher's office, at a public park, and on a restaurant patio. The interviews lasted an average of one hour and were audio-recorded by the interviewer and transcribed by a professional transcription service. All names have been changed, including the names of children and partners. The interview questions consisted of a variety of topics (e.g., guns, contraception, and domestic violence). The specific questions that will be analyzed for this thesis research will include concepts of gender and bullying (see Appendix A).

There was an attempt to engage in a convenience sample by recruiting parents who embodied diverse social standings, for instance; income, race/ethnicity, gender, education, religious affiliation, and political affiliation. Multiple methods of recruitment were used; a recruitment flyer was sent to a mental-health practitioner and to social science faculty at two respective institutions. Also, a flyer was posted on a social networking site and interview participants provided names and contact information for other possible recruits. I would like to not that participants whom were interviewed were given a $10 gift card for their participation.

Grounded theory does not specify that a diverse sample is necessary for yielding valuable findings; thus, the data analysis proceeded without a cross-sectional sample. However, I did require that all participants have at least one child between the ages of 3 and 11 years old. This age range was selected because research illustrates that parents have a significant amount of influence when children are within this developmental stage (Charmaz, 2006).

Study Design

I thematically analyzed these interviews in order to measure two constructs. First, I measured the gender traditionalism of the messages given to children. Second, I measured bullying preparation and looked for any variation in how parents define and understand, think, and talk about gender and bullying with their children.

To conduct the coding process, I engaged In-Vivo coding methods outlined by Charmaz (2006). This process includes a line-by-line analysis of each interview, paying particular attention to rich segments of the data. The initial coding will be expected to yield a large group of codes or themes that will be reduced continually throughout the analysis process. The second phase will be to compare the results of the initial coding process to address my research question, as well as reduce the initial codes into more specific codes or themes that will be able to be applied more broadly. Within the final phase, I compared these two measures across all thirteen interviews to see if any patterns emerge. The theoretical perspectives that will be used during the

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analysis process will be gender socialization and learning theory. I also was open to the presence of other themes that may be related to my research question.

Sample

The sample was composed of five men and eight women, four parents who identify as non-white, nine parents who identify as white, four parents who identify as Latter Day Saints; all the parents have at least some college, and most have a household income above $50,000 a year (see Table 1). Also, each parent lived in one of three cities in the northwestern U.S. and at the time of the interview they each had at least one child between the ages of three and eleven years old (M = 6.75 years). Given that the sample was comprised of 13 parents, I caution the reader not to make generalizations about the findings to any other populations.

Analysis Approach

Main research question: Do parents' messages to children about gender relate to the preparation they give their children about bullying?

Hypothesis: Parents that conceptualize gender on a spectrum are more likely to allow flexibility in their children's gender expression; this influences how parents discuss youth bullying with their children? What I anticipate to find is that parents that conceptualize gender on a spectrum will allow their children flexibility in their gender expression. As well as these parents are also more likely to prepare themselves for bullying and are merely to discuss youth bullying openly with their children.

In the preliminary data analysis, I listened to and read each transcript multiple times. Next, I wrote highlighted phrases within each transcript that provided an overall description of how each parent/interviewee defined gender, and how each parent/interviewee was prepared to discuss bullying with his/her child or children, or if he/she had discussed bullying with his/her child or children and how the conversation was discussed and/or received. First, each interview was coded to measure the gender traditionalism messages given to children by their parent(s).

After I conducted this analysis, I placed highlighted phrases from each interview within a spreadsheet to aid in identifying key themes and to see the range of parental perspectives on gender and bullying (see Table 2). Next, I wrote reflexive memos describing my initial impressions of each interview.

Chapter 4: Findings

My first finding emerged from analyzing the answers parents gave to our query about their children's awareness of bullying as a phenomenon: *Bullying preparation* categories ranged from no bullying preparation to extensive bullying preparation. I discovered the second category, *gender traditionalism versus individuality*, by asking parents to elaborate on their understandings of gender.

Messages about Bullying

Almost all of the parents in this study mentioned feeling nervous and uncomfortable discussing bullying-related topics with their children, and felt most comfortable leaving those discussions up to their children's school or ignoring the bullying. Each interview was coded to measure bullying preparation, while also looking for any variation in how parents define, understand, think, and talk about gender and bullying with their child or children. This finding was solidified by a quote from Becca (LZ) and Carl. This quote seemed to summarize how other participants felt about discussing bullying with their children:

Becca (LZ)

> *…The school is actually doing so much more to bring awareness to bullying and*
> *all of our kids had to sign an anti-bullying contract at school. We talked about*
> *that. We just did it after the first day of school, going over what exactly that*
> *meant that it doesn't always mean punching somebody or physical bullying but*

by calling people names and humiliating them and that there are lots of ways to

bully and that none of it is okay. I think the school is sending notes home to help

us remember to bring that up and remind them of that as well. You don't call

each other names and say stuff that we can remind them that there are better

ways to talk to people and treat each other.

Carl

It doesn't matter what they think. It's important what you think. Teaching him

and it's okay to just let that roll off. I think that's that hardest part to learn is

that bullying is just somebody trying to intimidate you and you need to just be

able to step back and kids have a hard time understanding. I remember when I

was a kid, feeling picked on by bullies and not understanding and having that

same conversation with my mom. Just trying to teach him and step back because

he's 13, almost 14. He needs to be able to learn how to deal with those kinds of

things on his own. Not getting involved unless he really asks for our help but

being there for him to talk to us about it.

Messages about Gender

Second, each interview was coded to measure gender categories that ranged from

Traditionalism to Individuality. Even though there is no formal definition of Gender

Traditionalism that I have been able to find within the literature. Gender Traditionalism is

associated with attitudes toward traditional gender role identities; masculine traits are strength,

control, bravery, toughness, and dominance, and female traits are dependence, cooperation, vulnerability, caution, express emotions, receptive, and sensitive (Wade & Brittan-Powell, 2001; Paterna & Martínez, 2006).   Nine out of 13 parents in this study mentioned feelings difficulties regard how to define and discuss gender personally, felling uneasy discussing or explaining the topic with their children, and feeling most comfortable leaving out this conversation unless specific questions were asked by their children. Four out of 13 parents shared feelings of difficulty on defining gender; however, they were comfortable working through the awkwardness because it is important to discuss it with their children. This finding was solidified by quotes from Kate, Chicory, and Adrian. The quotes seemed to summarize how other participants felt discussing gender with their children:

Kate

> *…there's only two genders male and female and because that's it [laughing]*
> *male   and female.*

Chicory

> *…Gender is the way that biological sexes are -- biological sexual differences are*
> *expressed in culture. So generally people expect a biological female to expect to*
> *behave in feminine ways and be gendered as a girl, and the same with a*
> *biological boy. He's expected to behave in masculine ways and be gendered as a*
> *boy. I don't believe that those are inherently attached to biological sex, but the*
> *rest of the world seems to see it that way. I raise my children though I -- I*
> *encourage them to not be stuck in the rigid gender binary.*

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Adrian

It [gender] means there are a whole lot really ugly bland choices of clothing in the men's rack and a much better variety of more interesting things that don't fit me in the women's rack. I only say they don't fit me because they're cut for women's shapes. Silly, but I guess that's kind of how you can sum up my perception of gender. I've never embraced traditional gender roles of my entire life. When I was a kid, I used to steal clothes out of my mom's closet. She always called me the daughter she never had. I've never really embraced or was very good at those typical boy activities. I like to ride my bike. I like to play in the woods with my friends but I had no interest in sports. I wasn't any good at it. I like to read. I like people who do that, sort of embrace qualities of each gender. I've never gotten along well with people who fall hard on one side or the other, very male, very female. I just don't associate with those types of people very much and I try to instill that in my kids as well. I don't know. Aside from the very obvious physical characteristics, I think everything else is completely ambiguous as far as gender goes. It's very flexible.

…embracing the elements that may be traditionally male or female don't have any sort of negative connotations if you are the opposite gender. It actually makes you a more well-rounded person to experience things from the other side, I guess…

... I don't expect anything at all from them. I only encourage and expect them to

live their lives the way that they want and to live full, happy lives whatever it is

they decide to be. That said, if Hailey, next week, decided to want to be a

princess then Riley decided he wanted to be a football star, I would probably be

a little bit disappointed. I would actually be more encouraging of them to

challenge gender roles any chance they get and not embrace the traditional

stereotypes…

Third, parents that were categorized in the middle-ground category based upon their

definition of gender I found have a continuously working definition of gender. Meaning they

seem to have a narrow view of gender however they are open to expanding that definition.

Through this quote, we can be identified that Ann is in a unique place with where she is working

through questioning her own views about gender while trying to be inclusive of other individual's

gender identity that does not fit within societal norms.   This finding was solidified by quotes

from Ann and Mario. The quotes highlight the recognition of fluidity about gender while bullying

is discussed or viewed in a very gendered way:

Ann

…I mean there's a couple of different parts to it really. I mean there's obviously

just biologically what gender you were born physically, but then emotionally…

[Pause for 11 seconds.] I think it's probably -- well I don't know. I guess it's

probably more how -- I don't know. It's hard to say because gender is -- there

are so many stereotypes, there are so many things. Like if you're a female then

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you should react this way to certain things and if you're a male you should react this way to certain things. I don't know. Really and truly though I think when it -- gender it comes down to how that person what they identify with more. I mean you can be born a certain way but there are plenty of people that identify more with being the opposite gender…

With this unique perspective in regard to gender has led to bullying preparation and discussion with their children also in a unique state based on the experience(s) the parent had in regard to bullying themselves as children, and how their view of what bullying is and how bullying is identified has changed over their life course.

Ann

I guess I used to just think it was a rite of passage but it really -- it's not. It shouldn't be. That's like absurd. Bullying though is … is … when you've got a person who's trying to make somebody else feel lesser than them. That's really it whether it's making them feel lesser -- like and they're using physical, a physical approach or maybe they're using a more of an emotional approach. But it's putting somebody down in

some   form or fashion.

The following is another example of a middle-ground categorized parent; however, Mario's is a very unique perspective that differs from Ann's experiences. This interviewee has a more Gender Traditionalist view about gender:

Mario

Gender is a black and white thing from what I've been taught… You
know, there's a man, there's a woman. You've got certain parts of you
and doesn't and you use those in certain ways. That's what gender
means…

In my house, for example, it's like my wife like there's certain gender de
fine rules everything she's good because she the woman and the wife and
certain responsibilities that fall upon me by default because of
my gender. Simple thing on the trash, that's the man's job… She
{wife} feels like she's the nurturer but I'm very involved I think just by
my upbringing.

Even though his view on gender is on the Gender Traditionalist side, Mario's view on bullying

highlights a more Individuality-based notions of bullying with regard to aggressive behavior(s):

Mario

Bullying means you just belittling someone and putting yourself above
someone else in any physical, emotional, psychological, you know,
sexual *context putting yourself above them, not as an equal. Be it that's*
out of *frustration or out of dominant, you know, and security or*
whatever. It's *not a positive thing but I think in a context we're all guilty of it*

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even   *though you don't mean to be. You don't think about it we're all*

guilty of   *it…*

…She's {daughter} very strong. She's very confident and she, you know,

she is only three she's like brothers get away from me I'm not

going to put   crap… I can see her as a bully. She's so demanding.

Maybe her, the older boy bully. The middle boy I don't see him do it.

He's so easy going like you know, except where he's bullied by his

brother but he wants his brother get in trouble so he'd be dramatic…

Connecting Between Gender and Bullying

Almost all of the parents in this study mentioned feelings of uncertainty when defining

gender and identifying behaviors as bullying, thus showing the level of complexity of gender and

bullying as well as the ambiguity of this research topic. The connection between gender and

bullying preparation can be shown by the following quotes that seem to summarize the range of

the parents' notions of gender and bullying preparation or lack of bullying preparation:

Roni (gender traditional; no bullying prep outside of school)

[Gender] Just male or female.

… I try for her to learn from that and say, "You know, what if you did

bring it again tomorrow and what if you ate it with pride in front of

them?" You mean like a salad or whatever this girl is making fun of you

know. I said, "How would you feel?" You know and one time

she did it   *again just to be strong and not let this girl get to her. I said,*

"You know   *we talked about whatever the food was and how normal that is*

and how   *whatever" but yeah bullying, it happens. It happens every day.*

Carl (gender traditional; no bullying prep prior to child being bullied)

I really believe gender is defined by your sex, male or female.

…my oldest is a teenager. He is in middle school and middle

school is I think where most people discover bullies for the   *first*

time. You   *don't really experience that in grade school, maybe*

some but not a lot. He has had some of that bullying experience where

kids pick on him…

…He needs to be able to learn how to deal with those kinds of things on

his own. Not getting involved unless he really asks for our help but

being   *there for him to talk to us about it…*

Adrian (individuality, proactively discusses bullying)

…embracing the elements that may be traditionally male or female don't

have any sort of negative connotations if you are the opposite

gender. It   actually makes you a more well-rounded person to experience

things from   the other side, I guess…

place

we've

in

… My first encouragement is to avoid violence whatsoever at any cost. But then also being a boy, there are those times when you just to have to throw a punch. You just can't get around it. I think that's a difficult to be though, and it's even more difficult to talk to a child about and say, "Yeah, well, here's this one time when it's okay to fight back." Yes, tried to address that and now, with Wolfie, he just finished his first year preschool and he had a kid who was bullying him in their playtime…

…It's fun as I learn something new to convey those things to the kids as well and that feels empowering. I guess by discussing it and by really talking to it, yes, you're opening yourself up to a bit of sadness and dis appointment but then you can then finish that off with a sense closeness and accomplishment and growth. Hopefully, personal growth from both sides…

Dawn (individuality, no bullying prep prior to child being labeled a bully)

I guess gender is just what people think that you are…So it's not necessarily how you're born or just that…

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...The school defines it as anything that's like untoward. To me, I don't think it should be that way because my daughter's been in trouble for bullying a couple different times. So it's hard for me to – things that were considered bullying when I was younger are – I mean, they're bullying now, but things that we did growing up are now bullying...

...there was a little boy, he was skipping around on the playground. And my daughter made the comment, 'You're gay...'

...a teacher overheard her. The boy wasn't upset at all, but a teacher overheard her and she got a couple days of detention for it... They don't ask questions. They just assume that it's all bullying. Anything that could be considered in any way is just immediately put in that category. There's no talking about it, no – it's, 'You're a bully.'

The connection between gender and bullying preparation based on this sample has quite a range of notions of gender (i.e. defining gender as just male or female to gender being ambiguous and fluid), but bullying preparation has a larger disparity (i.e. bullying preparation only from a teachers' perspective to proactively discussing bullying with children due to allowing gender fluidity). Parents from the Gender Traditionalist category had very strict definitions of gender while bullying preparation to remain within the educational system until there was a need to discuss bullying at home. While parents from the Individuality category had a range of bullying preparation discussions or lack of discussions while notions of gender were flexible.

In Table 2, you can see that six out of thirteen participants were identified as Gender Traditional with little to no bullying preparation compared, to four out of 13 participants who identified as Individuality with a range of no bullying preparation to a lot of bullying preparation. Leaving the remainder of the participants being identified as gender in a neutral or middle ground categories with bullying preparation also ranging from none to a lot of bullying preparation.

Chapter 5: Conclusion/Discussion/Future Research

Although there is no simple solution to solve the problem of youth bullying within or outside of schools and heterosexism in the larger society, there are measures that can be taken to reduce the impacts of youth bullying and create safer spaces. Youth bullying must be taken as a serious societal issue, and not just be perceived as an issue that occurs within the educational system. As the literature has shown, there have been improvements made in the fight and challenge of youth bullying in various ways.

The review of literature demonstrated that youth bullying is still a major concern not only for school faculty and staff, but for other students, and parents as well. Also, youth who might be perceived as part of the LGBTQ+ spectrum experience more acts of bullying than their perceived heterosexual counterparts. The primary goal of this study was to investigate how the parents of young children navigate the phenomenon of gender and bullying with their children, and to emphasize the importance of recognizing that youth bullying cannot only be solely addressed by school personnel or policy-makers, but starts within the notions parents have about gender and what they perceive as bullying in order to reduce youth bullying overall. Two primary themes emerged from the data analysis: *Gender Traditionalism and Individuality and Bullying Preparation*. To address my hypothesis on what makes parents that can be categorized underneath Individuality differ from those categorized underneath Gender Traditionalism, my findings conclude that Individuality parents have identified that individuality, freedom of self-expression, and rebelling against societal gender norms are important attributes in their lives.

With that parents hope to instill the same importance of these attributes within their children by allowing them to express themselves individually while proactively discussing outside reactions, and how to manage those interactions based on the children's age. Another finding is that parents within the Individuality category actively perform the opposite gender activities that would be considered ideal for males or females depending upon the gender identity of the parent such as fixing items around the house or wearing eyeliner:

Chicory

>*…I don't let -- just because I am gendered feminine doesn't mean I can't fix the sink and do the plumbing and the yard work and all of that kind of stuff…*

Adrian

>*…I've been in rock bands most of my life and so most of my kids have always seen me doing my hair and putting on makeup and things like that…*

These findings differ from the literature review signifying that parents need to be more included in the conversation prior to a bullying incident. Parents need to further explore his/her notions of what gender is, and be more proactive in discussing not only bullying but different ways youths can express themselves as individuals that may different from the perceived norm.

These findings build on previous research in three ways: (1) engaging queer theory throughout the data analysis resolved the differences between parents on how they experience and describe gender, and how that influences the conversation of bullying with young children. Also, parents who foster individuality with young children revealed that their notion of gender is perceived along a broad spectrum to be explored, and one can express oneself however he/she sees fit. This coincides with queer theory's notion that gender is a performance; (2) the study illustrates how parents conceptualize gender and how that influences how they discuss bullying with their children prior to victimization; and, (3) the study focused on parental perspectives of preadolescent children rather than the teachers' perspectives.

Queer theory used throughout the data analysis process is important to recognize because queer theory has never been used to examine bullying and/or bullying preparation. Queer theory can take into account the fluidity of parental conceptualizations of gender in the sense that parents who recognize individuality as a key factor for success and happiness recognize gender as a performance, and consider bullying as an issue that transcends gender.

The primary limitations of this study were the sample size and sample composition. The participants were recruited to embody a diverse range of racial and ethnic identities, education and income levels, and religious affiliations, but the recruitment efforts did not yield a comprehensive response. This could be due to the recruitment methods used limiting the sample to individuals with Internet access, contact with mental-health providers, and who were associated with other participants. Another limitation is that the topic of cyberbullying was not discussed by the participants during the interviews, and no specific question was asked of the participants to address the topic.

Future research could move in various directions: (1) investigation of this topic with a large sample, (2) continued investigation of how parents discuss gender and bullying with their

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preadolescent children prior to victimization, (3) examination of specific barriers parents (of all gender identities) experience when it comes to addressing bullying with their children, and (4) more research is necessary to understand youth who are questioning their sexual orientation and/or their gender identity, as they depend on social support, and the parents of these youth can bring valuable understanding to traditional parents as to perceived notions of gender. Here are some ways future research could benefit from expanding this study by sampling LGBTQ parents, parents of different racial/ethnic and religious backgrounds, or parents across the nation and compare parental definitions of gender and discussions of bullying with children based on geographic locations. Future research might include additional or different questions to gain a better understanding of bullying and gender. Hypothetical qualitative research questions to be concerned are: Describe your interactions with your daughter and/or son? Describe your parenting style? What is cyberbullying? Describe a scenario that you would identify as bullying and cyberbullying? How can bullying be prevented? How does ending bullying improve the human rights environment for everyone? Observe the reaction of various students, teachers, and parents when one child starts yelling at and pushing another child on or near school grounds? For a hypothetical quantitative research approach, consider the following question: From the following list of actions, which do you agree are bullying? Use the following scale: Definitely not bullying (1), Probably not bullying (2), Undecided (3), Probably is bullying (4), Definitely bullying (5)

- A group of kids in your child's class is spreading hurtful rumors about your child by sending text messages around.

- Your youngest child tells you that their older sister or brother keeps hitting and kicking when nobody is looking.

- Your child tells you that their teacher keeps calling them "stupid" every time they get an answer wrong in class and says there's no point in even trying to teach them anything because they cannot learn.

- You see a group of older kids from another school like to pick on a child from your youngest's elementary school. You notice them watch the child walking home or waiting at the bus alone, surround them, and take money, food, or toys. They also throw rocks and threaten to do worse.

- You find out your child has been making of a new kid in their class that is a refugee. You find out your child and their friends are always making fun of the new kid's English, saying racist things to the kid, and telling them to go back home.

These findings from this study that parents' messages to children about gender can influence the preparation they give their children about bullying. Parents that were identified under Gender Traditionalism were more likely to allow discussions about bullying to take place within their children's school. Bullying was only discussed at home after parents learned about their children being victimized, and typically stated bullying should be blown off if what was being said was untrue. Whereas parents that were identified under Individuality were prepared for and had conversations about bullying outside of their children's school. This relationship between these two variables in noting that six out of 13 parents were identified under Gender Traditionalism with little to no bullying preparation, and two out of 13 parents were identified under Individuality with extensive bullying preparation about bullying (see Table 3). My hypothesis was confirmed that these findings illustrate there is a weak relationship between parental perceptions of gender and how parents are more likely to discuss youth bullying with their children. These parents did express individuality is an important characteristic not only for

themselves to possess, but also for their children to possess. If my sample size were larger, a stronger relationship would be viewed between these two variables. Also, these findings from this study have revealed important implications for sociology. Research implications could include continuous exploration of gender and youth bullying from other theoretical perspectives as well as using a mixed methods approach that could yield a more encompassing understanding of this phenomenon. Practice implications could include assisting parents with becoming more confident and knowledgeable about content and processes that support educating children on different ways that gender can be expressed and youth bullying prior to victimization. Another practice could include helping parents plan for conversations and practice conversations about youth bullying with their school-aged children. How these findings connect to queer theory is with parental messages about individuality shows that gender expression is part of a spectrum that can happen at any point in one's life, and that gender-role expectations and expressions are to be performed and confirmed by our peers as authentic. In relation to bullying, there should be an on-going conversation about gender-role expressions from a very early age to reduce the act of bullying by parents and children that the key to understanding different gender expressions are recognized to be unique to the individual.

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Appendix A. Interview Questions.

1. What does gender mean to you?

        Tell me about your experiences talking to your child/children about gender.

        How do you think you model gendered behavior?

        Do you think it's important to model alternative gender roles or traditional gender   roles for your children?

        What do you expect from your child based on their gender?

        How do you feel when your child expresses different forms of gender?

2. Is your child aware of bullying?

        Is your child aware of bullying?

        Have you discussed bullying with your child? If so, tell me about that experience.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Pseudonyms	Sex	Age	Relationship Status	Race/Ethnicity	Annual Household Income	Highest Level of Education Completed	Political Affiliation	Religion	Children Demographics
Adrian	M	46	Partnership	White/Caucasian	$70,000 - $90,000	Some College	Very Liberal	Atheist	14/M; 12/F; 4/M
Ann	F	38	Single	White/Caucasian	$90,000 or above	Some College	Very Liberal	None	7/F; 13 Mo/F
Carl	M	34	Married	White/Caucasian	$50,000 - $70,000	Bachelors Degree	Middle of the Road	Latter Day Saint	13/M; 8/M; 5/M; 3/M; 3 Mo/F
Chicory	F	38	Single	White/Caucasian	Under $30,000	Masters Degree	Very Liberal	Unitarian Universal	8/F; 4/M; 2/F

									ist	
Cristina	F	37	Married	Latina/La tino	$90,000 or above	Masters Degree	No Response	Latter Day Saint	10/F;18 Mo/F
Dawn	F	32	Married	Latina/La tino	$70,000 - $90,000	Some College	Middle of the Road	Catholic	11/F; 5/F
Gertrude	F	34	Married	White/Ca ucasian	$50,000 - $70,000	Bachelors Degree	Conserva tive	Latter Day Saint	12/M; 1/M0; 8/M; 6/F; 4/M; 2/F
John	M	39	Married	White/Ca ucasian	$50,000 - $70,000	High School/E quivalent	Middle of the Road	Christian	1-/M; 5/M
Kate	F	38	Married	Asian	$90,000 or above	Bachelors Degree	No Response	None	3/F
Lauren	F	34	Married	White/Ca ucasian	$70,000 - $90,000	Bachelors Degree	Middle of the Road	Agnostic	6/M; 4.5/M
Mario	M	37	Married	Latino/Ca ucasian	$70,000 - $90,000	Bachelors Degree	Middle of the Road	Latter Day Saint	3/F; 8/M; 11/M

| Maude | F | 41 | Divorced | White/Ca ucasian | $30,000 - $50,000 | Masters Degree | Middle of the Road | Buddhist | 9/F; 6/F |
| Phil | M | 53 | Engaged/ In a heterosex ual relationsh ip | White/Ca ucasian | $90,000 or above | Doctorate | Liberal | Taoism | 14/M; 10/M |

Table 2. Parental Views on Gender and Bullying Preparation

	Traditionalism	Middle Ground	Individuality
No Bullying Prep	**Mario -** Gender is black and white (Man or Woman); addressed a lot at home due to older son bullying siblings as well as other kids based on his large stature, Daughter could be a bully one day due to having a strong personality; **Phil -** biological and personality differences between M/F; Bullying response was to place son in a martial art, no discussion of bullying beforehand; **Roni -** Gender differences based on anatomy; Reliant on the teacher to handle bullying; **Kate -** Only 2 genders M/F, Bullying - unsure about bullying due to growing up in China; Daughter imitates bullying behavior due to other	**John -** Gender what you're born with but there's extra circumstances that change things (refers to choices); Bullying - Oldest son was a bully by picking on younger children at school, contacted by the school prior to that no bullying prep; More Bullying - discussed how it happened the year before and told him that it wasn't proper and he wouldn't like that done to him so don't do it to others	**Dawn -** Gender is how people perceive you (birth does not = gender); Bullying - Daughter was considered a bullying in elementary school based on school policies/policy - wasn't discussed prior to incidents - one was addressed and another was not

	children doing it to her; **Carl -** Gender is defined by your sex (M/F); oldest son in middle school first discover bullies, picked on for being gay, conversation entailed "…it doesn't matter what they think. It's important what you think. Teaching him it's okay to just let that roll off…"		
Little Bullying Prep	**Becca (LZ) -** Gender boy or a girl and what society says is appropriate for you. Bullying - discussions on how to treat others especially those that are different, children's school does a good job at raising awareness		

	Traditionalism	Middle Ground	Individuality
	about bullying and prevention		
Moderate Bullying Prep			**Chicory -** Gender is the way that biological sexes are -- biological sexual differences are expressed in culture - I encourage them to not be stuck in the rigid gender binary; Bullying Discussed it home some but mostly gets it from school

Extensive Bullying Prep		Lauren - born M/F but life choices people can change his/her gender and certain things are ingrained in M/F (stereotypical boy interests such as cars and less emotional than girls); Bullying discussed a lot about it at home and at school; **Ann -** Gender is biologically what gender you were born but then emotionally… gender it comes down to how that person identifies with more; Bullying - a rite of passage but it shouldn't be/that's absurd	**Cristina -** No definition of gender; Bullying - has dedicated her life to helping women especially in domestic violence situations - very clear commination about not allowing anyone to be mean to her daughter; **Adrian -** Gender is physical characteristics as well as being completely ambiguous and very flexible; Gender fluidity examples available; …encourages children to challenge gender roles; Bullying - "Discussing experiences with children feels empowering while opening up a bit of sadness and disappointment but finish off with a sense of closeness and accomplishment and growth…"

Table 3. Gender Traditional, Individuality, and Bullying Preparation

	Gender Traditionalism	Individuality
No Bullying Preparation/Little Bullying Preparation	**Mario** **Phil** **Roni** **Kate** **Carl** **Becca (LZ)**	Dawn
Moderate Bullying Preparation		Chicory
Extensive Bullying Preparation		**Adrian** **Christina**