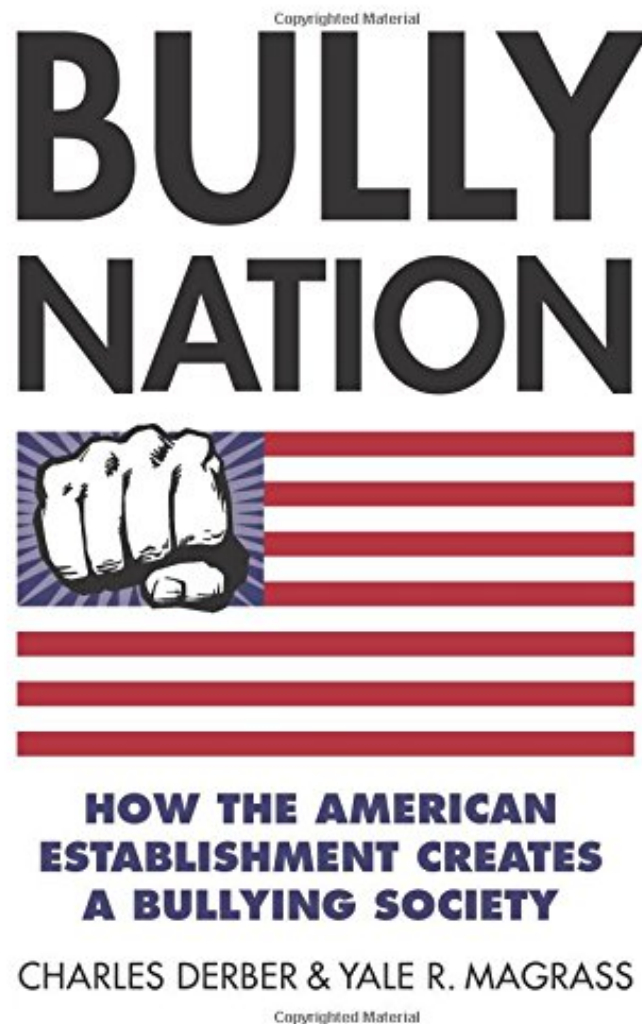


# **Bully Nation: How the American Establishment Creates a Bullying Society**

*Charles Derber, Yale Magrass*  
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**Charles Derber, Yale Magrass : Bully Nation: How the American Establishment Creates a Bullying Society** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bully Nation: How the American Establishment Creates a Bullying Society:

15 of 16 people found the following review helpful. In America, Bullies are EverywhereBy Gold Star Family SurvivorYes, I have been bullied! And never have I seen or heard anything that gave me more insight into bullying than this book. I can testify, first hand, that bullying is one of the most severe traumas a child or adolescent can feel. It is not simply a rite of passage to get over but something that molds you and shapes you throughout adult life. As I

remembered my youth, I knew just how deep and permanent were the scars it can leave, but I saw both children/adolescents and adults treat it as cute and funny. When I sought help from parents, teachers or other adult authorities, they would shrug it off or offer useless advice like ignore it or stand up for yourself. As I reflected back upon my childhood/adolescent bullying, I realized I did not have the power to solve it on our own. Perhaps, no victim does. After reading this book, I now see that bullying can only be addressed with the sociological imagination. Mid-twentieth century sociologist C. Wright Mills taught personal troubles are often public issues, whose cause rests with the larger society. The lesson: to change our lives, we must change society. We cannot resolve our bullying trauma without understanding how it is embedded in militaristic capitalism. Bullying actually replicates the capitalist hierarchy where the popular and powerful are supposed to overpower the outcasts, who are expected to know their place and not challenge it. The military needs people who are simultaneously violent and obedient and ready to kill. Combine the two; you get what the authors call militaristic capitalism- a doubly bullying society. In the generation since my youth, something had changed. Bullying is now publicly recognized, discussed and treated. However for all the attention it is now getting, it is still seen as something personal. It is believed bullies and their victims needed psychotherapy to help them adjust to society. However, the book brilliantly shows the anti-bullying cannot succeed if it approaches the brutality as something primarily psychological. It is a political problem and can only be addressed as such. This paradigm shifting book is, by far, the best ever written about bullying.

16 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Are you trying to figure out why super-bully politicians like Donald Trump are popular? Have you ever been bullied- and do you carry scars from it? Do you bully others and wonder why you do? Are you trying to figure out why super-bully politicians like Donald Trump are popular? This is a book you're going to want to read and read again. You're also going to want to talk about it with friends, family, workmates, and neighbors. If you're sick of being bullied by big corporations or Trumpesque people in your life, this book will give new insights and some hope about what to do about it. Bully Nation will upend your idea of bullying. It makes crystal clear that bullying is hardly just a kid thing. Or even just an act of individuals. There is structural bullying carried out by powerful institutions such as the Pentagon, Wall Street banks, fossil fuel and other giant corporations, the government, the media, churches, and political parties. The book shows that bullying is a problem in all relationships, organizations and societies. In certain societies especially the US - bullying defines the way of life and the national character. To succeed is to bully. If you don't, you will find it hard to survive. The authors argue that psychiatrists and school counselors have distorted the American conversation by treating bullying as a psychological problem. Bullying is far more. Using the famous sociologist C. Wright Mills idea that personal problems are public issues, the authors show that bullying in the US arises from a national bullying culture built around a system of vast power inequality. Our system of militarized capitalism requires that our biggest institutions, our leaders, and most of us as individuals are required to bully and to submit to bullying to succeed and just survive. Competition, ruthless self-interest and brutal toughness are the enshrined way of doing business while use of violent power is the military code of honor and victory. Capitalism and militarism make bullying the path to success. If you are not a personal bully, your company or organization may require you to do so. A manager may not want to bully his or her workers but the authors tell stories of how managers are bullied to bully workers (eg by threatening to lay them off if they don't work harder). And there are other stories about teachers who do not like grading but are bullied by the school system to do what they hate.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. DAN SAVAGE AND SCHOOL BULLYING EXPERTS: THIS ONE'S FOR YOU. By T. Prentice This is the first effort to CONNECT THE DOTS between SCHOOLYARD BULLYING and INTERNATIONAL BULLYING by the US empire, other empires and previous empires as well as the bullying baked into the DNA of CAPITALIST COMPETITION and DOMINATION -- which provokes bullying among ruling elites and down through the structure of what the authors identify as US militaristic capitalism. The authors defy usual compartmentalization of the schoolyard bullying problem to psychology -- to the exclusion of sociological explanations -- when bullying is not necessarily an unavoidable personal character flaw but is part and parcel of what makes militaristic capitalism work. In Bully Nation, the authors place the bullying phenomenon squarely within SOCIOLOGY and use a method called the SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION which links PRIVATE PROBLEMS with PUBLIC ISSUES and SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS such as: Bullying among elites. Bullying among corporations in the same industry. Bullying by corporations in the same industry against other industries such as banking. Bullying by corporations against workers, consumers and suppliers. Bullying by bosses against employees. Bullying by coaches against athletes. Bullying by cops against everyone not white, conformist and bourgeois and to raise revenue for local governments. Bullying by schools against parents and students. Bullying by rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment (this should go without saying in this male rape culture). Bullying by false in-groups versus false out-groups like those wearing trendy fashions versus those wearing yesterdays clothes. Bullying within families. Bullying within relationships. Bullying by parents against children. Bullying in the schoolyard by athletic thug bullies against the quiet, the artistic, the gay the different, the studious, and anyone else perceived as powerless by the schoolyard bullying elites. And yes, racism and sexism and worker and resource exploitation are pluperfect examples of bullying which are dots connected to the bullying by the US governments militaristic capitalism in international relations. Indeed, the Exceptional Nation is ALWAYS (with the possible exception of Russia and China and regional powers such as Saudi

Arabia, Israel, Brazil and India) the bully of small powerless countries which pose no THREAT. Especially if they are better electoral democracies than the plastic fantastic, shallow, quadrennial and meaningless Big Money / TV election campaign spectacle featured in the US. So Get This: By June of 2017, France, Iran, Germany, Ecuador, Greater England and Venezuela have all held or scheduled elections which are inarguably more democratic than those in the US they include MULTIPARTY debates and balloting (YES, including IRAN!) -- and even demon Russia will have its elections in 2018! But back to why the international bullying by the US empire? Same reasons as schoolyard bullying: seeking domination, hegemony, status, wealth and power. For example, bullying kids (rolling them) in the school restrooms to rob them of lunch money is no different than US corporations with military support rolling smaller nations for their mineral resources and slave labour. Internationally, the small, powerless nations either possess natural resources (including slave labor) coveted by the Wall Street corporate extraction industries -- said extractions (rolling small nations) protected by the US military. Or those small nations feature an authentic democracy and/or a popular socialism that works -- or doesn't toe the US / IMF party line -- like Cuba, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Iceland, Serbia, Uruguay, Belorussia and North Korea just to name a few. In the schoolyard the same BULLYING forces are at work. As in international relations, seldom is it bully against bully; rather it always a big bully against a powerless nation or person. At school the victim is often the smaller, studious, non-athletic, the poet or musician or actor rather than the athlete, a person racially or ethnically different from the dominant race or ethnicity, a person not fluent in English, or a person just plain different such as an out gay kid or the new kid on the block. Or date rape. Although the authors don't mention them, all the Seven Deadly Sins seem to be at work in the schoolyard and in the international schoolyard: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth which are all part and parcel of the urge to dominate and humiliate and sexually assault. BULLY NATION clearly demonstrates how the moving parts of militaristic capitalism work together to cause bullying the SOCIOLOGICAL explanation rather than the PSYCHOLOGICAL or ORIGINAL SIN explanations. The book connects the dots that have been so bafflingly atomized and censored and thus inscrutable despite years in school and because of a lifetime full of The Media. In the media, what they do NOT tell you is FAR MORE IMPORTANT than what they DO tell you. In the corporate media, when bullying is covered at all, it is always isolated out-of-context as a PSYCHOLOGICAL rather than as a SOCIOLOGICAL PROBLEM a personal flaw of the bully (or even the victim!) rather than a flaw of the almighty system. Such an approach elicits responses like why do kids do that? or why don't adults step in to stop it? or hand-wringing what, if anything, can be done about it? to nothing can be done about it. Worse, in the corporate media, schoolyard bullying is NEVER connected to the hierarchical bullying structure of The Corporation, The Military, Schooling, Law Enforcement, Competition, and Profit and rent-seeking within the overall context of resource and cheap-labour-seeking US imperial militaristic capitalism. Have you ever see the corporate media report the shooting of young Black, Latino and native American men by up-armoured police as an act of bullying? BULLY NATION also features an easy, seamless periodic introduction to Karl Marx by employing a few appropriate excerpts from his voluminous writings to explain why militaristic capitalism is such a self-destructive, alienating and dehumanizing, suicidal economic system which causes bullying down, throughout the system for nefarious purposes. In contrast to this review, the authors are not polemical. They write for the non-expert reader with academic detachment almost as if you are having a conversation with a favorite teacher or aunt or a more able peer to use Lev Vygotsky's term. Their writing is also without a whole lot of totally unnecessary eyes-rolling-into-the-back-of-your-head and mind-numbing jargon, theory and gobbledeygook. Best of all: no math. And lots of Ahas! For the record, SOME of the successful democracies and successfully socialist or defacto monarchical countries (Iraq, Libya, Syria, N. Korea) totally BULLIED and ruined by US military or CIA intervention or destabilization and regime change include Koreastan (1945 and ongoing) destabilized democratic Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954) Vietnamistan (1954 1976) the Congo (diamonds and 1961), Greece (1967), Indonesia and Sukarno (1967), The democratic Chile of Dr. Salvador Allende (9 / 11 / 1973), Nicaragua (1984), Yugoslavia (1996 and 1999), Iraq (1990-91 and 2003 - present), Honduras (2010), Libya (2011 - present), Somalia (ongoing), Yemen (ongoing) Syria (2010 present) and democratic Ukraine (2014). Not to mention US meddling and hacking into more than 80 elections in other nations. Bully nation IS AN EYE-OPENER. If you are brave enough and open minded enough. If not, You're Fired! Go watch more so-called reality TV ;)

It's not just the bully in the schoolyard that we should be worried about. The one-on-one bullying that dominates the national conversation, this timely book suggests, is actually part of a larger problem a natural outcome of the bullying nature of our national institutions. And as long as the United States embraces militarism and aggressive capitalism, systemic bullying and all its impacts at home and abroad will persist as a major crisis. Bullying looks very similar on the personal and institutional levels: it involves an imbalance of power and behavior that consistently undermines its victim, securing compliance and submission and reinforcing the bully's sense of superiority and legitimacy. The similarity, this book tells us, is not a coincidence. Applying the concept of the sociological imagination, which links private problems and public issues, authors Charles Derber and Yale Magrass argue that individual bullying is an outgrowth and a necessary function of a larger social phenomenon. Bullying is seen here as a structural problem arising from systems organized around steep power hierarchies from the halls of the Pentagon, Congress, and corporate offices

to classrooms and playing fields and the environment. Dominant people and institutions need to create a culture in which violence and aggression are seen as natural and just: one where individuals compete over who will be bully or victim, and each is seen as deserving their fate within this hierarchy. The larger the inequalities of power in society, or among nations, or even across species, the more likely it is that both institutional and personal bullying will become commonplace. The authors see the life-long psychological scars interpersonal bullying can bring, but believe it is almost impossible to reduce such bullying without first challenging the institutions that breed and encourage it. In the United States a system of intertwined corporations, governments, and military institutions carries out systemic bullying to create profits and sustain its own power. While acknowledging the diversity and savagery of many other bully nations, the authors contend that America, as the most powerful nation in the world and one that aggressively promotes its system as a model, merits special attention. It is only by recognizing the bullying built into this model that we can address the real problem, and in this, *Bully Nation* makes a hopeful beginning.

"*Bully Nation*" is the most comprehensive analysis of bullying yet published. It is a brilliant book that refuses to define bullying as merely a psychological concept. Instead, it addresses in great detail the interplay of bullying as having its roots in a range of historical, economic, political, and social conditions. In this instance, bullying functions as a metaphor to connect the private to the public, specific acts of violence to larger forms of systemic violence. Rather than treat bullying as part of a rite of passage confined to the often difficult process of growing up, Derber and Magrass treat it as a systemic force that produces values, social relations, structures, and collective identities steeped in violence and aggression. This is a powerful and compelling book that addresses one of the most important social problems of our time. It should be read by all educators, parents, and anyone else interested in a world free of aggression and violence. "*Bully Nation*" deserves widespread attention." Henry Giroux, author of *Zombie Politics and Culture in the Age of Casino Capitalism*

"*Bully Nation*" is absolutely terrific, an important, powerful and timely book that should be read by academic and public audiences alike. The authors have done a remarkable job of taking the topical social problem of bullying, which has received a great deal of attention over the past decade, and extrapolating it to economic, political, corporate and militaristic bullying. We come to understand that bullying isn't just for the schoolyard, it's a socio-pathology woven throughout our culture and guiding much of the way that the political economy is run. Their illuminating analysis illustrates how corporations and governments bully not only citizens the 99% but also the planet, and with reckless abandon. The consequences are potentially dire for our culture, for the middle class, for the nation's and world's poor, and for the survival of the planet. Without question, this is a book that will have wide appeal to academics, students, and public audiences. I imagine using this book in my own courses and am already anticipating with great excitement the important discussion that will be opened with my students as they grapple with the bully nation, and with the most important issues facing their generation." Jonathan White, author of *Sociologists in Action: Sociology, Social Change, and Social Justice*

Derber and Magrass force us to rethink our concept of bullying. Moving beyond the relatively limited focus on the psychological paradigm and interactions among children, they instead situate the process in a broader institutional context and relationships among adults. Their creative and expert treatment of bullying brings in the economy, the military, dominant political organizations, and indeed global inequalities as well. Their analysis of structural bullying fulfills C. Wright Mills's call for a sociological imagination that links personal problems to our social world. Their contribution offers new ideas, not only on the concept and sources of the behavior, but also on the direction where more humane and effective solutions will be found. Paul Joseph, editor of *The Many Faces of War: A Social Science Encyclopedia* "A canny and sobering look at bullying behavior and how it permeates our nation's major institutions. When children do it, we abhor it. When our leaders do it, we usually applaud it. The authors remind us. Oliver Stone

"This thoughtful study expertly dissects the bullying scourge that poisons lives and society, exposing its roots in the institutional structure of a militaristic capitalist culture that it reflects and nurtures, while also revealing the encouraging reactions that may offer cures for the malady and the factors that engender it." Noam Chomsky

A welcome departure from the popular habit of reducing distasteful behavior to family pathologies or genetic dispositions, *Bully Nation* is an important example of how intelligent social science can help heal the world. If bullying is rooted in history and structured by institutions, then citizen action can do something about it. John Ehrenberg, author of *Civil Society: The Critical History of an Idea*

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