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APPENDIX 4.1

STUDY SAMPLE

Participant type	n	*Number of interviews with each student*
California public high school juniors	2	1
California community college freshmen	5	2
California community college sophomore	1	1
California State University junior	1	1
California State University seniors	8	3
University of California freshmen	5	2
University of California transfers	5	2
Total	27	58[a]

[a]Represents total number of interview transcripts analyzed for this investigation.

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AN INTERSECTIONALITY ANALYSIS OF LATINO MEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THEIR HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIORS

Nolan L. Cabrera, Fatemma D. Rashwan-Soto, and Bryant G. Valencia

The issue of male underrepresentation in higher education has garnered a great deal of media attention, but most are at a loss in terms of what to do about the problem. This is largely due to spirited disagreement over identifying the underlying causes. There are some who claim the educational system has actually begun to favor female students over male students in response to the feminist movement in what Christina Hoff Sommers (2000) refers to as the *war against boys*. Framing this issue as male victimization is a very common way for it to be portrayed in the mass media, and it has even resulted in affirmative action programs granting admissions preferences to male applicants (Yakaboski, 2011).

Specific to minority males in higher education, the College Board,[1] the Association of Public Land-grant Universities,[2] and *Excelencia* in Education[3] have all produced reports and created initiatives to bring light to this issue. These efforts tend to frame minority men as targeted and marginalized within educational contexts. The problem with the discourse surrounding men of color in higher education is that the United States continues to be a patriarchal society, where masculinity is normalized and men are systemically privileged over women (Abalos, 2002; Connell, 2005; Yakaboski, 2011). Thus, the truly pressing and complicated question does

not make the headlines: How can a group be systemically privileged (men) and concurrently underrepresented? Within this context, the current study seeks to explore the intersection of being Latino and being male, and its relationship to educational achievement. The following questions guide this chapter:

- What academic and racial stresses do Latino men face during their undergraduate experiences?
- What help-seeking behaviors do Latino men engage in to manage the stress in their lives?
- What is the relationship between help-seeking behaviors and Latino masculinity?

In trying to understand the underrepresentation of Latino men in higher education, we critically examine the help-seeking behaviors of eight Latino men at the University of Arizona (UA).

Context: Arizona and Anti-Latina/o Policies

The year 2010 was a tipping point for the state of Arizona. It was an election year, there was a recession, immigration continued to be a hot topic, and appointed governor Jan Brewer (R) was looking to prove her conservative credentials. Anti-Latina/o policies served as perfect wedge issues for the Republican base in the state, similar to gay marriage in 2004 and the anti-immigrant HR4437 in 2006. The second session of the forty-ninth Arizona State Legislature passed SB1070 (Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act, 2010), and Governor Brewer signed it into law on April 23, 2010. The law requires police officers to check the immigration status of a person during any "legitimate contact" if "reasonable suspicion exists" that the person might be undocumented. Most critics of the legislation argue that SB1070 amounts to legalized racial profiling, and even Governor Brewer said, "I don't know what an illegal immigrant looks like" (González, 2010). There were a number of other laws passed during this time that were also anti-Latina/o, such as HB2281 (anti-ethnic studies) and Prop107 (anti-affirmative action), but SB1070 garnered the most national attention and has since been replicated in Alabama, South Carolina, and Georgia. The bill had a chilling effect in Latina/o communities throughout the state, and it is estimated that 100,000 Latina/os left Arizona in the months after SB1070 passed (BBVA Research, 2010).

Theoretical Framework: Intersectionality

The term *intersectionality* is more complicated than the word implies. On its surface, the term appears to be a concurrent analysis of two social identities (e.g., being Asian American and gay). Instead Cabrera (2011) argues, "From its inception, intersectionality research has focused on critical examination of multiple social identities as they are contextualized within systems of oppression" (p. 78). Cabrera (2011) specifically finds gender-based intersectionality analyses in higher education scholarship lacking because "this work fails to take account of the power structures that continue to favor men in society, and it tends to be an analysis of difference as opposed to illuminating hierarchical relations" (p. 78). With respect to this research, intersectionality means contextualizing Latino men within two spheres of oppression and domination: systemic racism (i.e., White supremacy) and systemic sexism (i.e., patriarchy). The participants in this research have more social identities than race and gender (e.g., ability, sexuality, class), but to make the analysis manageable, these two will be the focus.

In terms of Latino men, an intersectionality analysis creates a situation that Rashwan-Soto and Cabrera (2011) refer to as the *privilege paradox.* Latino males are systemically marginalized via their racial/ethnic identity, much like all other non-White racial/ethnic groups (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Feagin, 2010; Omi & Winant, 1994). Conversely, Latino males are systemically privileged relative to women in terms of their gendered identity (Abalos, 2002; Connell, 2005). Therefore, utilizing an intersectionality framework to explore the Latino gender gap in higher education highlights a tension between theory and empiricism. If being male continues to be a systemically privileged social identity (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) and obtaining a bachelor's degree is a prized commodity, how is it possible that Latino males are underrepresented in higher education (*Excelencia* in Education, 2007; Hurtado, Sáenz, Santos, & Cabrera, 2008; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009)? This concurrent focus on racial marginalization and gender privilege frames the current research.

Relevant Literature

Campus Racial Climate, Microaggressions, and Racial Battle Fatigue

The racialized experiences of Latino men can add stress to their lives, depress their educational performance, and create a sense of marginalization within the college campus (Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005; Sue, 2010; Yosso, Smith,

Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009). Milem and colleagues (2005) offer a conceptual framework for understanding the campus racial climate, which includes the following dimensions: an institution's historical legacy of inclusion/exclusion, compositional diversity (i.e., proportion of students and faculty of color on campus), the psychological dimension (perceptions of diversity), the behavioral dimension (diverse interactions), and the organizational/structural dimension (e.g., diversity in curriculum). These five dimensions set the context for student learning that can be either racially inclusive or oppressive.

Specific to the behavioral dimension of the campus climate, there is an emerging vein of literature regarding microaggressions (e.g., Solórzano, 1998, 2000; Sue, 2010). Sue (2010) defines *microaggressions* as "the brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual orientation, and religious slights and insults to target a person or group" (p. 5). The subtlety and frequency of these slights make them more detrimental to student success relative to more overt forms of racial insults. This, according to Sue, is because the targets of the microaggressions are caught off guard.

Within the context of predominantly White institutions of higher education, the frequency of microaggressions coupled with a hostile campus climate can be draining and isolating for racial minority students, which leads many to suffer from *racial battle fatigue* (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007). Racial battle fatigue is a "theoretical framework for examining social-psychological stress responses (e.g., frustration; anger; exhaustion; physical avoidance; psychological or emotional withdrawal; escapism; acceptance of racist attributions) associated with being an African American male on historically White campuses" (p. 552). Although this framework was developed specifically for Black students, it likely has relevance within the Arizona context, where anti-Latina/o sentiment is prevalent.

Masculinities, Latino Men, and Help-Seeking

R. W. Connell (2005) argues that masculinity is not simply a person being biologically male but rather encompasses *how* people perform their manliness. Connell further argues that the social practice of masculinity is closely related to structures of gender and sexuality that systemically privilege heterosexual men over their gay, bisexual, transgender, and female counterparts. Connell also states that there are multiple masculinities, but only a few are considered the desirable examples of masculinity. These forms of masculinity Connell refers to as *hegemonic*, or being both "normal" and positioned as socially dominant.

The critical work of masculinity research is very informative, but it is also ostensibly White. As Mirandé (1997) argues, "Ironically, [R. W.] Connell and other leading new feminist scholars have engaged in their own brand of hegemonic discourse by ignoring masculinity among Latinos and other subordinated communities" (p. 147). The intersection of race (Latina/o) and gender (masculinity) pushes on some of the edges of intersectionality research. Mirandé (1997) argues that Latino masculinity is distinct from White masculinity because Latino men are able to be more emotionally vulnerable: "Despite the popular macho stereotype of Latino men as cold, hard, aggressive, and insensitive, it is more culturally acceptable for Latino men to cry, to be emotional, and to demonstrate their feelings" (p. 85).

Abalos (2002) disagrees with this sentiment as he roots Latino masculinity more explicitly within a system of patriarchy. He argues that the wounds of racism and classism leave many Latino men angry, but without a means to channel their anger: "This situation leads to anger against one's self and others: 'I have to be in charge; I have to take control; I have to maintain my manhood, my honor, my machismo'" (p. 84). He further argues that this anger becomes manifest in "the self-inflicted wounds of an increasingly powerless patriarchy" (p. 84). This is a key difference between Abalos and Mirandé. Abalos tends to see Latino masculinity as much more problematic, oppressive, and self-destructive than Mirandé, and this disagreement highlights the limitations of the literature: There is insufficient scholarship on the basic question of what it means to be a Latino man.

Regardless, there is little debate that Latino men face a number of challenges that frequently inhibit their educational pursuits (*Excelencia* in Education, 2007; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009; Solórzano, 1998). Facing difficult circumstances does not have to be a prescription for failure. Rather, students can sometimes channel their energies into resiliency strategies (Arellano & Padilla, 1996; Cabrera & Padilla, 2004). Resiliency strategies frequently involve seeking outside assistance or utilizing collective strategies to overcome adversity, and this can be an affront to how young men enact their masculinity (Abalos, 2002; Barajas & Pierce, 2001; Connell, 2005; Mahalik, Good, & Englar-Carlson, 2003; Wimer & Levant, 2011). Critical masculinity scholarship highlights that "manliness" is frequently constructed as highly individualized, where help-seeking is framed as a feminine trait (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Although this line of research has been criticized for being ostensibly White (Mirandé, 1997), many Latino men frequently fall into the same pitfalls of avoiding help-seeking as it is also antithetical to their masculinity (Abalos, 2002; Barajas & Pierce, 2001).

Summary

There is a very limited empirical and theoretical foundation to base this work upon. The scholarship on microaggressions and the campus racial climate empirically fails to take account of larger sociopolitical forces (e.g., SB1070) that frequently inform the dynamics of the college experience. The current state of racial politics in the state of Arizona provides a unique opportunity to examine the role of anti-Latino public policy and its effects on the Latino student experience within institutions of higher education. In addition, the work on the campus racial climate tends to not take account of gender differences that contextualize the experiences of Latinos within institutions of higher education. In terms of masculinity research, it tends to be implicitly normed around White masculinity (e.g., Connell, 2005) regarding what constitutes "manliness" (e.g., a man having a ponytail has different levels of cultural acceptability between White and Latino communities). However, when people do take account of Latino masculinity, it tends to be insufficiently critical of the patriarchal habits of this group (e.g., Mirandé, 1997).

Method

We derived data from this research from eight semistructured interviews with Latino male undergraduates at UA. These interviews were part of a larger project meant to assess the campus racial climate for Latina/o students at UA in the context of extreme anti-Latina/o legislation. Most of the participants were first-generation Latino college students, and they were from the state of Arizona. UA is a large research university, predominantly White (approximately 65%), in the southern part of Arizona. The interviews usually lasted about an hour, and members of the research team transcribed them verbatim. We then coded them thematically, using a mixture of inductive and deductive strategies. Specifically, we analyzed narratives for themes of academic/racial struggles, the participants' help-seeking behaviors, and what these narratives meant when contextualized within the participants' Latino and male social identities.

Findings

The participants we interviewed experienced social stress in terms of race and difficulty adjusting to the academic rigors of higher education. Despite their numerous struggles, the young men in this research tended to avoid any type of help-seeking behavior.

Racial Struggles

Many of the participants we interviewed talked about issues of race-related stress they incurred during their undergraduate experiences. Some had difficulties interacting with their White peers. Others had issues stemming from off-campus incidents, such as racial profiling. One student, Rogelio, was from the south side of town, where the population was largely Latina/o. When he took his girlfriend out for dinner, they tended to go to the largely White north side of town, and he continually was pulled over by the police:

> I had just started going out with my girlfriend, um, we went out for a year, but when we just started going out . . . um . . . we . . . I remember we, like, cause she was, like, man I have never been pulled over so many times cause, like, we always go to the north side of town cause a lot of the stuff I like and a lot of the stuff I do is up there to, like, restaurants. . . . So we'll go up there and she's like . . . she's like every time since then I get pulled over so many times. I think I've been pulled over, like, two or three times, like, on our first two or three dates. (Rogelio)

He suspected this was in part due to his racial background but did not think there was much he could do to change the situation: "I guess there's, like, instances where you think, well, like, are you racial profiling but you just kind of, like, rationalize it. Like there is nothing I can do about what [the police officer] thinks" (Rogelio).

Other participants discussed difficulty coming from a predominantly Latina/o home community and trying to adjust to the culture of a predominantly White institution. Salvador specifically talked about his struggles trying to maintain a connection to his native culture via food:

> I think the most uncomfortable thing I dealt with was just the food. I felt so uncomfortable. There was one kitchen for . . . as many students as I can't really recall or remember, . . . but just being in the kitchen trying to cook up something that was from home like *menudo* or something like that, it's like a circus. Everyone is like "What's this?" or "Oh dang that is so interesting" or "That's gross." Words like this would pop up. (Salvador)

For Salvador, the challenge became adapting to the culture norms of an institution that was dramatically different from his home community. He faced the additional barrier of facing scorn regarding his cultural heritage manifest in food preparation ("That's gross"). In addition, he described how he was

forbidden by administrators in Residential Life from bringing his *molcajete* into his dorm room:

> But they just didn't, like, allow me to go and bring my *molcajete* and, like, make a salsa. My apartment, as soon as I got to my apartment, that's what I bought because I love making salsas in the *molcajete* like . . . I just . . . my dad and my mom are . . . That's every meal has, like, a salsa with it and, like, that whole first year was, like, rough for me cause I didn't have that with me and I . . . I just wasn't comfortable enough to be cooking that, um, and uh yeah, like I said, it's just uncomfortable when everyone else is different and it's not that they weren't accepting it's just that it felt to me like a lot of pressure had to, like, kind of, like, entertain them instead of [be] comfortable. (Salvador)

Salvador's experience was slightly different from Rogelio's because he was not overtly targeted or harassed because of his cultural background. Rather, he was denied the ability to feel culturally comfortable in his residential living environment and even felt some pressure to "entertain" his peers. This changed only when he left university housing and rented an apartment off campus.

Many of the participants also described stress related to the racial politics of Arizona—in particular, SB1070. One of the participants recently became a U.S. citizen, but with the passage of SB1070, he felt it was necessary to carry identification on him at all times even though he was no longer legally required to do so:

> Well, I always used to carry my permanent residence card, but then when I became a U.S. citizen I didn't carry my passport card with me. . . . After a certain point, I started carrying it again because I felt pressure. I had heard stories of people who were stopped because they forgot their wallet. I always feel, like, that little pressure in the back of my head saying, "Don't leave the house without proper paperwork or you're going to get targeted." (Salvador)

Even as a U.S. citizen, Salvador felt that he might be targeted under under SB1070. He heard of other people being stopped, and he did not want to be caught without the proper documentation. He did not feel that his citizenship status offered him sufficient protection.

Most of the participants' experiences with SB1070 involved their family members who were undocumented. For example, Fernando began doing all the driving for his father because his father was afraid that if stopped for a traffic violation, he could be deported. This was more than a theoretical

exercise because Fernando's mother, who was a U.S. citizen, had a police officer ask her about her citizenship status during a routine traffic stop.

> [My father] doesn't have any papers right now, so if he gets deported I probably won't see him again. Or we would have to cross him. . . . Uh, for my mom she became a citizen a year and a half ago, so I really was scared for her. But having that experience of being stopped by a police officer and asked if you are a U.S. citizen or not it's . . . uh, it's not terrifying but uncomfortable, but they stop you because of your skin color. (Fernando)

Fernando downplayed the toll driving his father to and from work took on him personally, but he did say that he was generally worried for both of his parents. This worry was a sentiment many participants echoed. For example, Cisco offered, "I'm honestly more worried about some of my family members that are in the U.S. illegally . . . that aren't supposed to be living here but they are just to make their lives better." Race/ethnicity-related stresses were not the only ones the participants described. Almost all discussed their individual difficulties adapting to the academic rigors of higher education.

Academic Struggles

Much more than the racial challenges, the participants described substantial difficulties adapting to the rigors of academic work in college. Manuel was very direct that the leap into higher education was a difficult one because his high school was not very academically rigorous:

> It's the academics struggles because when I was in high school . . . high school was not difficult, you know? High school I felt like I exceeded to, you know, to more than what the average student does. With that, you know, not having to study you know . . . just knowing stuff. (Manuel)

For Manuel, the biggest leap was the difference between rote memorization and critical thinking. In high school, he excelled because he could simply repeat facts that the teacher said in class, and that was sufficient to be academically successful. In college, the professors "made [us] actually apply the facts to real-life situations" (Manuel). This difference led to academic struggles, especially during his first year of college.

Julio spoke more in the abstract regarding his struggles adapting to the rigors of higher education, but also offered how the struggles made him feel in the process—something very few of the other participants did:

> [The challenges of college are] brand new to me. I don't know what to do. I'm angry. I'm scared. I'm frustrated. Uh . . . I don't know what to do. I'm just

> like, what do I do now? I thought I was right there. I thought I knew already. But I'm far from it. There are always new challenges coming to the world each and every day, and I should be open to those. . . . I should be open and try to achieve, try to push those challenges down. I see a challenge as a wall, a brick wall—after you learn the brick wall it's not that hard to climb. (Julio)

Julio expressed a number of emotions in his narrative (anger, fear, and frustration), but then described the metaphor of climbing a wall. His anger, fear, and frustration stemmed from not knowing how to navigate the challenges of college. Therefore, his first challenge became learning to navigate an essentially foreign system in what Bowen and Bok (1998) refer to as knowing the "shape of the river." However, Julio offered little in terms of tangible steps he could or did take to "learn the brick wall."

Solomón rooted his discussion of academic challenges in a specific class: calculus. He broadly described his academic struggles, but spent most of his narrative lamenting missed opportunities in terms of the available resources that *could* have helped him succeed in the class:

> S[4]: I've struggled in the fact that I haven't really . . . like there have been . . . I've been given certain, like, what do you call them? Resources to use and I've neglected on actually using them, which has made it, you know, like, made just the comprehension of everything around the U of A kind of hard if, um [inaudible], in regard to school.
> N: So what's an example of a resource you are talking about?
> S: So, . . . um, . . . I came in taking calc as a freshman, and I'm not saying that's not possible but it's a hard class.
> N: Okay.
> S: And it . . . uh . . . like, there is math help here math help over there and I didn't really take advantage of that help how I should have, so it sort of hindered my academics a little. (Solomón)

Solomón described not only his struggles in a particular class but also that he did not take advantage of the opportunities for academic support that were afforded to him via tutoring ("math help"). He was not entirely sure why he refrained from seeking out help even though he knew he was struggling, and this was a consistent theme throughout the interviews: the avoidance of help-seeking behaviors.

Help-Seeking Behaviors

Fernando said that his transition into college, especially taking math, was very difficult. However, he said that when faced with academic difficulties, he tended to rely on himself instead of seeking outside assistance:

> My math class was a bit challenging . . . my first semester, [and I think] it's probably because I wasn't used to the fast pace, it was actually my first time being exposed to that subject, um, it might have been because I was scared to approach the professor or teacher and ask for any help. (Fernando)

During the course of the interview, Fernando kept exploring his avoidance of help-seeking behaviors, and also offered, "I think I was too proud actually to seek help, [it's] possible. In high school I got straight As and here I was in class and I was struggling to actually pass" (Fernando). For Fernando, asking for help was an affront to his academic pride. In high school he was an A student, in college he was not, and this change led to him being "scared to approach the professor."

Julio offered many other reasons why he never sought out help during his undergraduate career. He discussed feeling a great deal of trepidation when asking for assistance:

> I feel like I can probably get through it by myself, but there will be a time where I'm like I have no other choice it's too late. I have to go now, like, really I don't want to walk into those offices because I will have to tell them this is where I am, this is what I'm missing, and what do I do next? I feel like I'm vulnerable, I won't know what to do, and they might tell me in the end guess what you won't be able to go to medical school—that's what I am afraid of is them crushing my dreams. (Julio)

Julio, like many of the other young men interviewed, tended to contextualize his academic success and struggles as his own and no one else's ("I can probably get through it by myself"). His narrative also contained a number of emotions regarding vulnerability and fear, especially as it pertained to his dream of going to medical school. Despite his dream, Julio's apprehension led him to avoid seeking out help, even when he needed it.

Salvador began to find some methods of seeking help when faced with adversity. He and his best friend created a reciprocal relationship in which they served as a shoulder to lean on when the other was struggling:

> I vent, ha ha. [The] person I vent to is my best friend over the years. Um . . . when we are having a rough day, or something bad happened [she] is a person I can go to . . . and tell her everything and vice versa. And we kind of like just ease ourselves down when something is going wrong, and I think just having that person that contact to go to you don't have to just bottle it up and I guess just keep that stress you have someone to go to, and I have somebody to go to . . . to kind of alleviate that stress. (Salvador)

Salvador was a unique case because he discussed seeking out his best friend to "vent" to when faced with challenging situations, and he said this helped "alleviate stress." Although this is a very important first step, he also made no mention of seeking more formal support in, for example, subject-specific tutoring, going to office hours, or forming study groups. Instead, he only utilized this emotional outlet to cope with the stress in his life.

Rogelio was unique among the participants in this study because he actually stated specific people whom he sought out when he was struggling. Each person had a different function depending on his issue. He found specific supports for academic issues, professional ones, and even issues regarding leadership in his student organization:

> R: If it's, like, something really overwhelming . . . I will always seek outside help, like I'm not too shy to ask for help.
> N: Does it happen very often?
> R: Um, I mean for my first couple years, yeah . . . um . . . recently not really just cause it's kind of the same like the same type of situations you encounter. (Rogelio)

A key component to Rogelio's narrative was that he took account of his emotions ("I'm not too shy"), and this allowed him to engage in help-seeking behavior that many of the other participants described as stoking fears or promoting vulnerability.

Discussion

The narratives of these Latino male students were illuminating for a number of reasons. Not surprisingly, the sample of Latino men tended to experience stresses in their lives stemming from both racism and academics. Interestingly, even when the participants were describing the difficulties, they concurrently downplayed the negative impact it had on them personally. For Rogelio, being pulled over in the largely White, affluent part of town was commonplace, and he tended to focus on his girlfriend's adverse reaction to the situation. Julio, when discussing academic struggles, spoke broadly about seeing them as challenges to be conquered, but he offered no concrete solution to the problem. Even when these young men were struggling, they rarely criticized external entities; rather, they tended to place the onus on themselves individually for changing the situation. When it came to supporting family amid the climate of SB1070, the participants understood it was part of their responsibilities to help their relatives. Placing high levels of accountability on themselves individually was also a consistent theme even

when discussing help-seeking. The participants almost uniformly knew there were resources available to them, but they also rarely took advantage. A very interesting component of their narratives stemmed from how these young men talked about their emotions. Many were very open about feeling afraid and vulnerable, and this prevented them from seeking out help. The one participant who did openly seek help, Rogelio, specifically said he was not "too shy" to ask for assistance.

The fear of vulnerability that prevented some of these young men from seeking help may highlight an underexplored component of masculinity research. Masculinity in general, and Latino masculinity in particular, is frequently conceptualized as the social domination of heterosexual men over women, gays, lesbians, and bisexuals (Abalos, 2002; Connell, 2005). These men demonstrated that an additional component of their masculinity was an avoidance of being vulnerable, which may also be the avoidance of being dominated (what Abalos [2002] refers to as the "self-inflicted wounds of patriarchy"). Essentially, if these young men do not make themselves vulnerable, they inhibit their academic progress but their manhood does not come into question in the process.

This was a very interesting finding because many of the young men described going through different trainings in which they learned about sexism, homophobia, and male privilege (a full discussion is beyond the scope of this chapter). Even though many had engaged in deconstructing gender, sexuality, and oppression, none spoke about the unconscious habit of masculinity highlighted in this research. This meant that even though many were conscious of the sexist assumptions embedded within using the phrase "you guys," they were still engaging in a type of self-limiting/self-destructive masculinity by refusing to engage in help-seeking behaviors.

This is consistent with traditional masculinity work that highlights how men in their struggles with masculinity frequently engage in a number of self-defeating behaviors, which lead to decreased levels of health, psychological well-being, and academic performance (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Thus, it is actually common for men as a whole to perform worse than women while still maintaining social dominance. What is interesting about this issue is that it breaks down the perpetual division between critical and practice-oriented perspectives. All too often, critical theory is framed as being too idealistic and lacking any implications for day-to-day practice. Conversely, practitioner-oriented analyses are seen as uncritically subscribing to the dominant paradigm (e.g., racism, homophobia, sexism, classism). If it is the case that the masculinity of these young men limited their academic progress, then working through masculinity (a critical approach) could result in an improved academic performance (a practical

outcome). The underlying question is: What would this type of intervention look like?

There should be spaces for Latino men to engage and critically work through what it means to be a man. This includes not only an analysis of sexism and homophobia but also an examination of the self-defeating habits of masculinity. At its base, avoidance of help-seeking behaviors by these participants was rooted in fear of vulnerability. This creates a very tricky situation for practitioners trying to engage Latino men in these conversations: Emotional discomfort prevented these young men from help-seeking, but openly admitting to emotional discomfort is frequently seen as an affront to Latino masculinity (Abalos, 2002). Thus, it is not surprising that many Latino men, instead of being openly vulnerable, prefer to rely upon themselves even if they are individually incapable of handling the issue. This means there should be proactive attempts to engage young Latino men in these discussions because it is unlikely they will initiate.

In addition, these dialogues need to be structured and sustained over time. The unconscious and frequently self-destructive habits of Latino masculinity were developed in these young men over several years. Therefore, it is unreasonable to expect these habits to change in one afternoon, and a sustained structure could mirror a lot of the work already conducted in intergroup dialogues (Zuñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002). The topics of these *intra*group dialogues can include:

- What does it mean for me to be a Latino man?
- How am I hurting myself by trying to be more "manly"?
- How have I hurt other men by pushing them to be more "manly"?
- What kind of a man do I want to be?
- What kind of *men* do *we* want to be?

The last question engages the relationship between peer pressure and masculinity. A great deal of self-defeating Latino masculinity involves men trying to appear more manly in front of other men (Abalos, 2002). If instead Latino men collectively can have a vision of what it means to be masculine in a nonoppressive, non-self-defeating manner, they can hold each other accountable—flipping peer pressure on its head and pushing each other to be better men in the process.

If these spaces can be established, the next question becomes: How can a facilitator actually ensure participation? Despite the highly individualized narratives of the Latino men in this research, many still participated in student organizations (e.g., Latino fraternities, *Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán* [MEChA], or Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers [SHPE]). There is potential via organizational affiliations, again, to use a type of "positive peer pressure" to engage Latino men in these discussions. If practitioners can work with the leadership of the organizations, it can help leverage a collective of Latino men to engage these issues. The collective component is critically important because most theorists frame masculinity as the performance of gender (Abalos, 2002; Connell, 2005; Mirandé, 1997). To be a performer, one must have an audience. Thus, the performance of masculinity is about not only how a Latino man feels about himself but also how receptive his peers are to the particular form of masculinity he presents. Strategies meant to positively redefine Latino masculinity need to be collective in nature. Otherwise, the rebellious actions of one individual can be suppressed by the larger collective (i.e., traditional peer pressure).

It is worth noting that the participants were all interviewed by a Latino male member of the research team. This begs the question: Would they have been so open about their emotional states if a female interviewer were present? In regard to the issue of practice, this highlights a pressing issue for which there is currently no easy answer. If part of Latino masculinity is a rejection of feminine influence (Abalos, 2002; Barajas & Pierce, 2001), how effective can female practitioners be at engaging this issue? How open will Latino men be to listening to women? Will they be willing to be vulnerable in front of women? More importantly, what are the conditions that need to be in place before Latino men will listen to women? Although the narratives of the participants do not illuminate the answers to this question, it is still a very pressing one moving ahead.

Finally, those engaging Latino men in these discussions need to be cognizant of sociopolitical forces outside of the university that frequently inform the campus experience. Most discussions of the campus racial climate focus on the university, with little attention given to governmental policies. Although the framework advanced by Milem and colleagues (2005) lends some credence to the idea of governmental policy shaping the campus racial climate, there is almost no empirical examination of how this operates. SB1070 dramatically impacted these young men's lives even when they did not think they would be targeted. It affected their families and their everyday habits (e.g., carrying ID at all times). Even though the Latino men in this research downplayed the potential impacts of this legislation, their lives changed as a result. There were increased familial responsibilities and personal stress. Practitioners working with Latino men, therefore, need to be aware of the larger sociopolitical landscape that contextualizes and affects the lives of these young men.

Conclusion

This research leads to more questions than answers regarding Latino masculinity and educational (under)achievement. There is a need for increased, sustained discussions regarding the subject of Latino masculinity, but what should these interventions look like? How should they be structured? What constitutes "best practices" for Latino men working through their masculinity? Even with these pressing questions lingering, this focus is a dramatic and important shift from the popular discourse. The narratives of these participants avoid the pitfalls of "reverse sexism" (Yakaboski, 2011), instead centering the discussion on the underlying issue: self-defeating Latino masculinity.

Endnotes

1. http://advocacy.collegeboard.org/preparation-access/educational-crisis-facing-young-men-color
2. www.aplu.org/page.aspx?pid=1845
3. www.edexcelencia.org/research/latino-males-higher-education
4. *S* refers to the participant "Solomón," and *N* refers to the interviewer "Nolan."

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PART THREE

RESEARCH ON PREPARATION, PERSISTENCE, AND SUCCESS FOR LATINO MALES IN SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION