

Latinx Barbershop Masculinities: Dominican Men and The Adaptive Macho

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Transnational, Migration, Caribbean

Emmiyan Ferro Diaz

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Ariana Ochoa Camacho

Alex Miller

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University of Washington

Abstract:

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Emmiyan Ferro Diaz

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Ph.D. Ariana Ochoa Camacho

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Men of color are usually stereotyped as inhabiting specific toxic, hypermasculine traits and other harmful characteristics. This is especially the case for Latino men, whose masculine stereotypes are dominated by the concept of Machismo. Despite such stereotypes, the topic of Latino masculinities has only started to receive considerable scholarly attention. Therefore this study seeks to understand how Latino men embody masculinities in specific social cultural context such as a barbershop. In this study, I argue that Latino men recontextualize their masculinities, which assumes new shapes in the U.S., and I theorize as “adaptive masculinities.” In order to study and analyze how gender is embodied by Latino men within unique social and cultural spaces, I employed ethnographic methods which include participant observation and in-depth interview with six participants from Bacano Barbershop. This study concludes that masculinities are often adaptive and frequently employed strategically by immigrant Latino men in order to reap the benefits that are associated with maleness in a patriarchal socio-cultural

system. The six Latino men in this study adapted their masculinities in ways that allow them to maintain some form of power, even in a context that devalues their privileged position.

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Introduction

The room was small, bright and cluttered with electronic instruments as William stood next to his son's hospital bed. It was late at night, he had just gotten off work, but his son, Yandel, needed immediate medical attention, so it did not really matter how tired he was. His eyes were tearing, he needed to make sure his son was alright, however there wasn't much he could do but to comfort him. Despite his inability to help his son, William stood next to Yandel for hours not wanting to leave his side, ensuring that he was always comfortable and safe. Even when Yandel's condition would get worse and security was called to subdue him, William literally would put his own body in their way to protect his son. William wanted to make sure his son would not get hurt and also, that Yandel would not hurt anyone else. So, he did whatever he could to comfort and calm Yandel.

Near the far side of the hospital bed stood Williams wife, Vivian, whose behavior was the complete opposite of Williams. She immediately adopted the role of the voice of authority, while William remained the comforting one. She was here for her son to get better, but comforting was not her way, and unlike William she was aggressive about it. She would tell Yandel that he was not going anywhere until he got better. Despite the boy's pleas to go home, Vivian did not budge and kept screaming at him "you are not going anywhere until you get well." The boy only got worse as his mother berated him for not trying to find support sooner. Her aggressive behavior did not stop there, at one point she even went up to him to hit Yandel because he was being "disrespectful." This event resulted in William getting physically in the way to prevent her from hurting Yandel, while he continued to gently tell him that everything is going to be alright, and everything will fall into place.

Men of color are usually stereotyped as inhabiting specific toxic, hypermasculine traits and other harmful characteristics. This is especially the case for Latino men, whose masculine narrative is dominated by the concept of Machismo. Machismo is a toxic form of hypermasculinity that is reported to inhabit the hegemonic position in specific socio-cultural settings, such as in Latina America (Arciniega et al., 2008; Henry, 2017; Herrera et al., 2013; Hirai et al., 2014; Hurtado & Sinha, 2008, 2016; Mirandé, 1997; Nuñez et al., 2016; Ojeda & Piña-Watson, 2014; Paz, 1961; Saez et al., 2009). Machismo has been described as the “negative aspect of Latino masculinity” (Ojeda & Piña-Watson, 2014, p. 289) and a standard that Latino bodies must meet which is related to hypermasculinity, aggression and violence (Henry, 2017). As a result, all Latino men are seen as machista, indicating they are thought to be abusers, often violent, and serial womanizers, regardless of their differences of class, culture, education, occupation, gender beliefs, and birthplace.

Some scholars have sought to move away from the mostly negative conceptualization of machismo by attempting to highlight some positive traits (Henry, 2017; Herrera et al., 2013; Ojeda & Piña-Watson, 2014). For example, Ojeda and Piña-Watson (2014) highlight the concept of Caballerismo, a prosocial form of masculinity, as characterizing the positive features of Latino masculinity such as “nurturance, social responsibility, and emotional connectedness” (p. 289). These studies are limited in endorsing a two-tier “good/bad” models that do not take into account the intersectional positions that Latino men often inhabit.

Other scholars have attempted to move beyond narrow traditional notions of masculinity by proposing that there exists a multitude of Latino masculinities (Broughton, 2008; Hurtado & Sinha, 2008, 2016; Mirandé et al., 2011). For example, Broughton (2008) identifies a “fluid typology” of masculine stances that Latino men adopt in response to pressure to migrate (p. 572).

These studies are also limited in focusing on a particular ethnic group from a specific social class, indicating that other populations have yet to be examined.

Despite increasing interest in Latino masculinities, there is yet to be sufficient research that focuses on the fluidity of the topic. Research that addresses Latino men and masculinities is especially scarce within certain socio-cultural and gendered settings such as barbershops, a space where Latino men may feel more comfortable to express multiple forms of masculine identities. At present, only a single article is available that focuses on the Latino barbershop (Solórzano, 2019). Solórzano's study was not specifically about masculinity, nor was it conducted in the United States, and was more of a photographic project and was not designed to provide or support any kind of scholarly findings. Therefore, detailed research that explores the complexities of Latino masculinities and its performance through bodies in a unique context, such as barbershops is necessary within the United States.

A study on Latino masculinities is important due to the high rates of suicide, violence and abuse Latino men and women endure (Alcalde, 2011, 2014; Herrera et al., 2013; Hirai et al., 2014; Nuñez et al., 2016). The purpose of this ethnographic project is to understand how gender is embodied by Latino men within unique social and cultural spaces. In addition, it aims to better understand how Latino men perform their masculinity and how particular settings and conditions influence and sometimes even regulate their gendered performances in a variety of contexts.

Similarly, masculinities are often viewed as a stagnant concept, something that is concrete and rarely changes. For example, in Latino culture, masculinities are often viewed as characteristics that are mostly fixed. Hegemonic versions have been the dominant form of masculinity performed up until recently, which does not exclude other versions from also being possible, and indeed there is every indication some version of masculinity can and will

eventually supersede it. My research shows that masculinities can often be adaptive and also employed strategically in order to reap the benefits that are associated with maleness in a patriarchal socio-cultural system. My findings indicate that the men in my study perform these adaptive versions of masculinity in order to more easily obtain a pathway to full U.S. citizenship. So, for the men of Bacano barbershop to not perform them, as is the case of one of the men studied (discussed later), can literally mean the loss of their green card and quite possibly deportation, and all that it entails. But before we meet the men of Bacano Barbershop, let's review the existing literature on masculinities and Latino masculinities.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

Masculinities – An Introduction

Gender theorists propose that gender is not inscribed on the body but is enacted through everyday repetitive doings (Butler, 1988, 1990; Carrigan et al., 1985; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Accordingly, gender must be understood through bodily gestures, movement as well as other representations that people proclaim such as behavior, dress and attire. West and Zimmerman (1987) proposed that gender is a “situated doing, carried out in the virtual or real presence of others who are presumed to be oriented to its production” (p. 126). Therefore, gender is not the possession of the individual, but a social script performed for an audience in social situations. History, culture, families, societal divisions and other social institutions regulate how gender is performed by bodies (Carrigan et al., 1985). This indicates that gender is corporeal performance that is done for an audience that is well trained in its social configuration. Gender is

performed for people who understand its construction, meanings and desired effect. Thus, gender performance can only be understood in the particular context in which it was produced.

Butler (1988, 1990) argued that gender is culturally and historically constituted “stylized repetition of acts” associated with notions of females and males (p. 519). Gender is a presentation that occurs on the body, indicating a “constructed identity” created through the principle of naturalness. In other words, the presentation of gender on a body gives the appearance that it is something “normal” or ordinary for bodies to perform. Thus, further legitimizing the naturalness of gender dichotomies. Similarly, Butler (1988, 1990), proposed that “gender creates the idea of gender,” indicating that gender is only “real” to the extent that it is performed (p. 522). Suggesting that masculine and feminine expressions become real only to the degree that bodies in the world accomplish them. In other words, masculinities are not a fixed character type but something that is socially constructed and made real in its social performance.

Masculine Social Practices

Most social science scholars agree that masculinities are overwhelmingly socially constructed (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Dowd, 2010; Hurtado & Sinha, 2008, 2016; Kiesling, 2007; Messerschmidt, 2016). Masculinities are fluid, forever wedged on a loop of social redefinition. Dowd (2010) proposed that “masculinities are a set of practices where [individuals] have to engage and perform” (p. 26). Masculinities are accomplished through social practices, such as domination, behavior, mannerism and language (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kiesling, 2007). This ritualistic acting out on the world is a practice that serves as a way to legitimize male acts as being only natural within the gender order. Still, specific cultures tend to favor certain masculine practices over others. In the case of the United States, the masculinity

that is most valued is able, white, heterosexual individuals that are well moneyed (Hurtado & Sinha, 2008).

Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity is the most culturally accepted gender pattern or “masculine practice” in a particular context. (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Connell, 2001; Messerschmidt, 2016, 2019). The concept of hegemony was used by Antonio Gramsci, (1971) to describe specific forms of cultural domination by the ruling elite. Borrowing from hegemony and applying it to gender, Connell and Messerschmidt propose the concept of hegemonic masculinity to describe gender relations in a patriarchal society. Today the concept remains the Anglocentric approach that propels the field of critical studies of men and masculinities.

Hegemonic masculinity is not a specific type of masculinity, but a “relational concept” that inspires specific gendered patterns of “hegemony, not merely domination” (Messerschmidt, 2016). In other words, hegemonic masculinity is a performance that very few men can accomplish, still, it makes it necessary that “all men” position themselves in relation to it. Therefore, hegemonic masculinity legitimizes men’s dominant position over women in patriarchal societies.

Central to this concept is that multiple masculinities coexist in a particular context, but they do not populate the same privileged position. Hegemonic masculinity is not merely constructed concerning femininity but also other types of non-hegemonic masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2016). According to Connell and Messerschmidt, (2005) subordinate masculinities are the masculine practices constructed as “lesser than”

hegemonic masculinity, for example, the masculinities of effeminate and/or gay men. Complicit masculinities are the masculine practices that benefit and sustain patriarchal domination but do not personify full masculine domination. Marginalized masculinities are the masculine practices that are discriminated against and disadvantaged because of the compounding effect of social categorization of race, class, gender, and ethnicity, one example are the masculinities of Black men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) concept of hegemonic masculinity is fruitful but limited when applied to marginalized populations. Given that all non-white groups are categorized as "marginalized" through white/Black binary framework, men of color, particularly Latinos, have often been left out the conversation beyond traditional conceptualizations. For instance, studies on Latino masculinities have been limited by concepts such as machismo, a version of "hegemonic masculinity" equated to a fixed character trait that seemingly describes all Latinos (Hurtado & Sinha, 2008, 2016; Mirande, 1997). Therefore, a significant portion of scholarly work has failed to account for an array of localized and dynamic masculinities that may provide significant insight into the gendered lives of Latino population, specifically Latino men.

Similarly, hegemonic masculinity is limited in its ability to conceptualize the intersectional experiences of Latino men. Intersectionality describes the overlapping social categories that combine to significantly disadvantage people of color who encounter two or more forms of social subordination (Crenshaw, 1991). When considering race, class, culture, nationality, and gender, certain types of masculinities no longer fit into subordinate, complicit, or even marginalized categories, but may significantly overlap with both hegemonic and subordinate gender experiences. For example, Latino men may meet certain hegemonic masculine descriptions, but may find themselves in a subordinate position in different contexts

(Hurtado & Sinha, 2008, 2016; Mirandé, 1997; Mirandé et al., 2011). Thus, the intersectional experience of Latino men requires further research within masculinity studies.

Latino Masculinity

Latino men occupy a unique intersectional position in the United States. According to Hurtado & Sinha (2016), Latino men inhabit a "contradictory position within a system of privilege" (p. 12). Latino men do enjoy certain privileges from being males in a patriarchal system, but their privilege is devalued. Latino men may belong to multiple social categories, for example, they could be working-class men, also immigrants, and Spanish speakers, who are non-white, and from mixed background, and who also may be gay or disabled – all statuses that contribute to them experiencing “racism, ethnocentrism, classism and heterosexism” (p. 12). Therefore, Latino men may construct and perform their masculinity much differently than white men and men from other cultures, ethnicities, and social classes.

Borderlands theory helps to understand Latino men’s intersectional position, or the experience of people who reside in contradictory systems, such as gay or disabled men. Anzaldúa, (1987) develops borderlands theory, expanding on the idea of double consciousness proposed by WEB Du Bois (p. 99). Key to Anzaldúa’s conceptualization is the borderlands consciousness, "La consciencia de la Mestiza," which is a hybrid consciousness advanced from living in between and within borders, in the "borderlands" (Anzaldúa, 1987). The hybrid consciousness is the result of the tensions and internal conflicts that Latinos encounter in the borderlands, such as the struggle of hybridity, multiculturalism and transnational.

Machismo

There's a large and growing amount of literature that specifically associates machismo with Latino men's bodies and masculinity (Alcalde, 2011; Fleming et al., 2019; Henry, 2017; Hurtado & Sinha, 2008, 2016; Mirandé, 1997; Ojeda & Piña-Watson, 2014). According to Ojeda and Piña-Watson (2014), machismo is the non-adaptive and negative side of Latino masculinity. Similarly, Hirai, Winkel, and Popan (2014) described machismo as a Latino cultural belief that "involves hypermasculine characteristics," such as aggression, dominance over women, and control (p. 106). Moreover, Henry (2017) described machismo as "relating to hypermasculinity like aggression, dominance, and sexism" in Latino men (p. 21). Consequently, a machista is habitually associated with Latino men through these descriptors: hypermasculine, violent, womanizer, aggressive, demanding, controlling, dominating, hypersexual, alcoholics, sexist, the breadwinner, and emotionally detached. An image popularized in media depictions and political discourses of the "bad hombre" who are "gang members and drug dealers" (Trump, 2016). Machismo can be understood as a hypermasculine and toxic version of masculinities (Alcalde, 2011; Henry, 2017; Rudolph, 2012; Saez et al., 2009). A type of hypermasculinity accomplished through the separation from anything feminine, the domination of women, control, violence, virility and sexual promiscuity. In other words, machismo is accomplished through constantly asserting one's masculinity by way of practices which presents the self to be an active performer rather than passive (Girman, 2004; Strong et al., 1993). The macho self is gained by the total denial of anything that might be considered feminine or passive and the constant enactment of behavior that claims its belonging in the dominant gender order or active performer.

Caballerismo

Some scholars have sought to move outside the negative definition of machismo proposing the existence of positive qualities and prosocial behavior. Prosocial behavior is defined as being helpful, having a positive attitude and promoting strong socio-cultural acceptance and building alliances through friendship. It is also frequently stereotyped as an effeminate, or 'girly' thing to do (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). One example of this is seen on scholarship of Caballerismo, a chivalrous and prosocial version of masculinity that incorporates positive attributes of Latino men (Arciniega et al., 2008; Nuñez et al., 2016; Ojeda & Piña-Watson, 2014). Arciniega et al. (2008) describe Caballerismo as the "positive side of machismo" or a courteous version of masculinity. Similarly, Ojeda and Piña-Watson (2014) proposed that Caballerismo is made up of positive traits such as "nurturance, social responsibility, and emotional closeness" (p. 289). Moreover, Nuñez et al. (2016) suggested that Caballerismo encompasses a positive image of Latino gender role traits akin to, "chivalry, bravery, and family provider" (p. 3). These studies are limited in endorsing a "two-tier" and "good/bad" model that does not consider the intersectional position that Latinos inhabit. Similarly, these studies appropriate a dualistic conceptualization which legitimate the naturalness of binary gender dynamics. Therefore, these studies further contribute to the legitimization of binary gender relations and patriarchal dominance.

Latino “Masculinities”

Recent studies have illustrated the plurality of Latino masculinities beyond the conceptualization of machismo (Broughton, 2008; Hurtado & Sinha, 2008, 2016; Mirandé et al., 2011). In a study that explored the impact of neoliberalization of Mexico, Broughton (2008) examined the gendered migration practices and attitudes of low-income Mexican men. He argued that in response to pressures to migrate North, Mexican men adopt “one or several forms” of masculine stances from a potentially fluid typology. Broughton (2008) collected data from four different fieldwork events lasting two weeks each. He also draws from several individual and group interviews.

Broughton’s (2008) findings reveal three fluid masculine stances that Mexican men adopted in response to pressure to migrate. These are the “the traditionalist, the adventurer and the breadwinner” (p. 572). Traditionalist men adopt “hegemonic masculinity” positions that emphasize traditional gender roles and family cohesion. Adventurers are men who adopt “fluid stances” often engaging in risky behavior to attain gendered aims such as independence. Lastly, the breadwinner stance refers to the men who are “forced out of circumstance,” deciding to migrate North hoping that “provisions will foster mobility” for their family members (p. 585). Broughton's findings illustrate just some of the gendered responses of Mexican men to the pressure to migrate North due to economic change caused by neoliberalism. The findings suggest that rather than possessing fixed masculine stances Latino men strategically negotiate certain gendered stances in an effort to meet “instrumental and identity goals” depending on specific life stages (Broughton, 2008).

Another study by Mirandé, Pitones, and Díaz (2011) examines whether the “ideology” of machismo is a “class-based phenomenon” that is found mostly among “poor, uneducated, working-class, immigrant Latino men.” In their study, Mirandé et al. (2011) compared the traditional Latino gender attitudes and belief of a sample of undocumented, under educated men in low wage occupations (Day-Labor group), and a sample of educated, and nonimmigrant Latinos with stable jobs (Primary-Labor group) using the Mirandé’s Sex Role Inventory (MSRI). MSRI is a traditional gender role belief measure designed to possess additional cultural validity than previous measures (Mirandé et al., 2011). The study results indicated that the Day-Labor sample group of Latinos were more likely to endorse “machista beliefs” such as traditional gender roles, the domination of women, and control of women’s sexuality.

The findings suggest machista attitudes and beliefs are not culturally based, rather they were influenced by social economic circumstance (Mirandé et al., 2011). The Day-Labor group's lower position as seasonal laborers, without fixed wages and steady employment, made them feel insecure about their masculinity. Therefore, to compensate for their lower position these participants were more likely to hold traditional beliefs about gender roles. This study indicated that Latino men from lower class were more likely to endorse traditional gender belief, but Mirandé et al., (2011) warns against generalizing the findings. Overall, the study primarily indicates that there is a wide assortment of Latino masculinities which should not be reduced to single conceptualizations.

Mirandé, Pitones, and Díaz’s (2011) study on Latino masculinities was limited in several ways. First, the sample consisted of men of Mexican origin, indicating that their findings may not be generalizable to other Latino groups. More significantly, their study was limited by their methodologies and research instruments used. While the MSRI appears to be a somewhat valid

measure, questionnaires limit the answers that participants can supply. Similarly, participants can give evasive answers, questions can go unanswered, and most importantly questionnaires lack participant personality, or the participant's unique standpoint.

More recently, Hurtado and Sinha (2016) interrogate the over-reliance on the concept of "machismo" and the duality frame, "either/or" thinking generally applied to men of color in critical studies of men and masculinities. In a study of educated Latino men, they argue that Latino men's exposure to feminist consciousness in higher education as well as their close contact with women who experience patriarchal oppression are significant factors in the development and expression of a feminist masculinity. They also argue that "overemphasis on male domination over women (and some men)" has limited the scope of masculinities studies by leaving unexplored the multiple complexities that make up a Latino intersectional social identity. As a result, multiple expressions of masculinities and the values associated with them have been left unexplored by scholarly research. Specifically, the intersections of class, race, gender and sexuality, and the formation of gender consciousness have not been adequately explored. For their analysis Hurtado and Sinha (2016) combine three theoretical frames, intersectionality, social identity theory, and borderlands theory, and propose the concept of "Intersectional Identities" in order to examine the intersections that impact Latino men's masculine performance and feminist consciousness. Hurtado and Sinha (2016) used data from three original self-conducted studies, the Latino masculinities study, the Chicana feminist study, and the Brown and white masculinities study. The majority of their data came from the Latino masculinities study which consisted of 105 Latinos between the ages of 19-33 enrolled in college.

Hurtado and Sinha (2016) uncover the existence of Latino masculinities beyond machismo; an expression of manhood that is ultimately intersectional and feminist. The

participants indicated they could only imagine women's experiences, however Latino men's intersectional identities, educational exposure, and proximity to women facilitated their feminist consciousness as well as their adaptation to feminist masculinities. Similarly, experiences within their families, such as witnessing the difficulties of a single mother, encouraged the love and respect sons felt for other women. These findings illustrated that Latino men define their masculinity and negotiate their identity differently depending on the social context. Being well aware of their status in the United States, participants in this study reject notions of hegemonic masculinity. Similarly, they defined their identity in contradiction to the hegemonic masculinity of the United States (Hurtado and Sinha, 2016). These findings illustrated that the way participants define their masculinity was encouraged by their belonging to various social group or particular contexts.

The Barbershop as a Cultural and Gendered Space

Twitchell and Ross, (2006) propose that a boy's first haircut cut is a "rite of passage," it is a period when young boys move away from their mother. This "rite of passage" appears to cross cultural borders, "[Latino] cultures even have a phrase for it: "en la barbería no se llora" (p. 105). To date I cannot find a single peer reviewed study that focuses on Latino barber shops in the United States, indicating the need to for research that explores the barbershop as a significant institution for distinct ethnic populations.

Historically the barbershop has served as a significant institution for the Black community. There is an increasing and growing number of studies that show that the barbershop is a place where Black men frequently attend. (Alexander, 2003; Chamberland, 2009; Earl

Wright II, 2001; R. Jones, 2012; S. J. Jones, 2015; Marowa-Wilkerson, 2014; Mills, 2006; Shabazz, 2016; Twitchell & Ross, 2006). Several health and STD prevention studies have illustrated that the barbershop is a significant place to reach the Black community given that it serves as more than a place to get haircut but a communal space of discussion (Baker et al., 2018; Hill et al., 2017; Idriss, 2011; Luque et al., 2011; Moore et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2014). Some studies have focused on HIV and sexual risk behavior and (Taylor et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2014), prostate cancer (Hill et al., 2017; Luque et al., 2011) and promoting health education (Idriss, 2011; Moore et al., 2016). These studies were much more concerned in spreading education and promoting healthier lifestyles for Black men, leaving out all other ethnic populations and the perspective of women.

Several studies have been conducted that examined the barbershop through ethnographic methods (Alexander, 2003; R. Jones, 2012; S. J. Jones, 2015; Shabazz, 2016). In an ethnographic study Alexander (2003), explored the Black barbershop as a cultural discursive space marked by distinct cultural practice and cultural exchange. He describes the barbershop as a centralized communal location where Black men seek to bond with one another through a ritualized performance of culture and gendered interactions. Alexander (2003) posits that the Black barbershop is a “cultural space marked by ritual and cultural enactment” of Black men (p. 107). In other words, the Black barbershop is a racialized and gendered space that is (re)constructed by performances, practices, and cultural rituals such as handshakes, hairstyles, and language. These practices and rituals tend to function as an “inclusionary and exclusionary criterion” for a specific community member (Alexander, 2003).

Alexander's ethnographic study had its limitations. First, the study did not involve interviews. So, the perceptions of the men who attend the barbershop were not addressed.

Similarly, only one ethnic group was examined suggesting that the performance of culture and the rituals that mark a cultural space could be different for other ethnic groups who congregate in barbershops such as Latino men. Future studies should consider looking into the cultural practices and traditions of other ethnic populations, such as the cultural and gendered practices of Latino men.

Another ethnographic study of a barbershop by R. Jones (2012) focused on exploring the ways in which Black men communicate in a barbershop. In her study, R. Jones (2012) found that interactions among Black men tended to revolve around feeling “dichotomized between being masculine but also a man” (p. 41). In other words, Black men felt pressured to meet a particular and opposing criterion of maleness, for example, being a man and acting like a man. While in the barbershop, these men employed a number of strategic communication styles and topics to not only display and assert their masculinity but also their manhood. Suggesting that within the barbershop Black men are expected to act masculine but often feel conflicted between opposing ideas of manhood and maleness.

Another ethnographic study by S. J. Jones (2015) examined the ways in which Black men talk about culture and morality through a racial lens at a barbershop. S. J. Jones (2015) posits that Black barbershops are gendered and racial spaces that demand that Black men engage in a strict cultural performance. So, when a man or a woman does not put on the racial presentation they are called out by other patrons in the barbershop as not being genuinely “Black”. Similarly, discussion and conversations about culture, Blackness, and masculinity serve as a way to authenticate Black male identity. In other words, discussions and conversations served as a way to claim what is considered to be an “authentic” Black culture, Black masculinity, and Black

values. Thus, it is through the performance of culture that Blackness is legitimized, especially in barbershops where “acting Black” is expected and demanded (S. J. Jones, 2015).

A fourth ethnographic study by Shabazz (2016) examined the social interactions that took place in a Black barbershop. Attempting to provide a better understanding of how the barbershop impacts the shaping and molding on male identity Shabazz (2016) asks how interactions in the barbershop influences’ patrons’ worldviews and if the barbershop functions as discursive spaces to transmit cultural values. Three themes were especially prevalent in the shaping of identity among Black men. These were the learning of “Black history, developing skills in argumentation and debate, and male bonding” (Shabazz, 2016, p. 310).

The study findings indicated that the barbershop serves as a “discursive space” where young boys’ identities are solidified as they are inducted into manhood within the Black culture. Suggesting that the Black barbershop serves as a school or an institution where Black men and boys learn about the history, culturally specific rituals and community participation. Much like the previous studies, Shabazz’s (2016) study was limited to a single ethnic and gendered group. Therefore, indicating that the voices of women and other men of color, such as Latinos have not been explored.

Chapter 2

Methodology

According to Denzin (2009) in the social sciences, “nothing speaks for itself” everything involves interpretive thinking (p. 71). Interpretivism is a philosophical framework that is concerned with the subjective experiences and the social meanings people draw from those

experiences. Interpretivist hold that natural science and social science are different, therefore require different methods (Denzin, 2009; Geertz, 1973; Schwandt, 1994). Central to interpretivism is that reality is subjective and socially constructed. Interpretivist researchers believe the social world can best be understood through the experiences of those individuals who must live them (Chowdhury, 2014; Denzin, 2017). Interpretivist research uses naturalistic methods such as ethnographies, interviews and grounded analysis.

What Interpretivism does not do well is operationalize observations made in the field that view people as a set of interconnected identities, not a monolith. The goal of interpretivism is to view aspects of identity in the abstract and not within the larger contexts within which they exist. Therefore, a significant portion of scholarly work has failed to account for an array of localized and dynamic aspects of identity (in this case masculinities) that may provide significant insight into the gendered lives of Latino people, specifically Latino men. The realities these men live in are intersectional by nature requiring being mindful of considerations such as class, culture, gender, nationality, religion, race, and other identity markers. As Crenshaw (1991) notes, these intersections harm most people of color. These converging social categories when viewed in reference to their relation to social concepts such as transnational and performative are best observed through an intersectional feminist lens that analyzes interlocking systems of oppression.

Ethnography

An ethnography is a qualitative research approach that examines people in a specific culture or setting overtime (Fetterman, 2010; O'Reilly, 2012). More specifically, ethnography is a systematic practice that involves personal engagement with people over an extended period

within a specific setting using observations, interviews, and other naturalistic methods.

Ethnographies are rooted in anthropological scholarship. Particularly the writings of Bronislaw K. Malinowski, who is often considered the founder of the “fieldwork” methodology (Fetterman, 2010; O’Reilly, 2012). Ethnographies are helpful because they give voice to people in their own local context, by way of a “thick” description of certain events (Geertz, 1973). Therefore, by focusing on “thick” descriptions of the experiences and conversations of the men in the barbershops, it creates possibilities for advancing unique awareness about the gendered lives of Latino men. Still, my research is much less concerned with reaching any definitive conclusions than it is in provoking a number of key questions that arise from my field observations and interviews.

Critical Ethnography

There are several ways to conduct ethnographies (Fetterman, 2010; Wolcott, 2008) but I follow Karen O’Reilly’s (2012) critical formulation of ethnography. O’Reilly (2012) draws from Willis & Trondman, (2002) and provides a critical definition of ethnography as a practice that:

evolves in design as the study progresses; involves direct and sustained contact with human beings, in the context of their daily lives, over a prolonged period of time; draws from a family of methods, usually including participant observation and conversation; respects the complexity of the social world; and therefore tells rich, sensitive and credible stories (p. 3).

What makes O’Reilly (2012) formulation unique is the position that ethnography should be informed by the concept of “practice” or what Willis and Trondman (2002) call “theoretically informed methodology for ethnography” (p. 398). In other words, ethnography should be guided by a framework that’s understanding the interconnections between agency and structures, observes the everyday happenings, is reflexive and refines its practice as an ongoing process.

Thus, ensuring that a macro approach is followed to gain a broader understanding of the context and the various ways in which social structures take effect through everyday happenings.

Especially relevant to my study is the critical approach to ethnography, which seeks to make sense of the meanings behind certain actions in specific contexts and also in the larger configurations of power and dominance. According to Thomas, (1993) critical ethnography starts from the idea that certain structures and institutions complicates the lives of certain people more than others. Similarly, it assumes that what is out there to know comes from preconceived assumptions that have been uncritically accepted (p. 33). Therefore, generating various forms of social oppression which institutes certain worldviews.

The goal of critical ethnography is to critique forms of hegemony, oppression and power in order to generate social change. Critical ethnographies are helpful because they allow researchers to investigate areas of social life that are assumed to be natural to the majority of the population. Similarly, they permit researchers to scrutinize the gender practices of a single culture sharing group in the local context and the larger social structures.

Data Collection

The main participants are the six males' barbers who make up the staff at Bacano barbershop, see Table 1. As a measure of recruitment, I used both flyers and snowball sampling procedures. I took flyers to the barbershop in an effort to recruit participants. However, of the six Latino men, see Table 1, I interviewed and observed in my study all were recruited by word of mouth. Therefore, my research mainly depended on snowball sampling procedures. I decided to

focus on the six barbers because the men were the one who created and recreated the transnational space that this study is based on.

Table 1: Participant Demographics

Name	Age	Ethnicity	Birthplace	Education Level	Socially Perceived Race
Alfredo	Late 30s	Hispanic/ Latino	Dominican Republic	Secondary School	Black
Daniel	Late 30s	Hispanic/ Latino	Dominican Republic	Secondary School	Mixed
Emmanuel	Early 40s	Hispanic/ Latino	Dominican Republic	Primary School	Mixed
Luis	Early 20s	Hispanic/ Latino	Dominican Republic	Some College	Black
Mario	Mid 30s	Hispanic/ Latino	Dominican Republic	Primary School	Black
William	Mid 40s	Hispanic/ Latino	Dominican Republic	High School	Mixed

Interviews

Fetterman (2010) explains that the interview is “the ‘ethnographers’ most important data gathering technique” (p. 40). It allows ethnographers to place their observations and experiences in the field into a larger context. O’Reilly (2012) proposed, there isn’t any real clear distinction between participant observation and an interview because “a good ethnographer will take any opportunity to listen and ask questions” (p. 118). In other words, any moment could be rich in data and that there should not be much difference between the two. Qualitative interviews can either be formal or informal, with a designated time and place or just regular interactions. Questions during these interviews are intended to capture a varying degree of experiences and opinions from participants. Ethnographic interviews are usually unstructured and open-ended (O’Reilly, 2012). The researcher asks questions related to themes emerging from observations. Similarly, qualitative unstructured interviews provide insight into the individual subjective understanding of events.

This study conducted unstructured face to face interviews with six participants, the barbers from Bacano barbershop. Interviews lasted anywhere between thirty-five minutes to one hour. These interviews took place in the back office, or often in the participants’ personal vehicle. Before the interview, I went over the informed consent, to assure that the participant understood all their rights, confidentiality, and their ability to withdraw from the study. As an extra measure of protection, I did not require or used any signature or used their real name.

All interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder and transferred via USB into a designated file on the UW HIPAA compliant OneDrive cloud. During interviews, I also took handwritten notes as jotting that were developed into full notes later that day. These interviews

were transcribed verbatim using HyperTRANSCRIBE and saved directly to the designated OneDrive folder. The transcripts were then provided to each participant, in paper form, and each participant had the opportunity to review and make corrections. The interpretations of these interviews were informed by my observations in the field.

Participant Observation

According to O'Reilly, (2012) participant observation is the main method of the ethnographer (p. 86). Participant observation allows the researcher to learn about the cultural practices and events from the perspective of those being studied. For O'Reilly, participant observation consists of “participating in people’s lives over a period of time, observing, asking questions, taking notes, and collecting other forms of data” (p. 113).

For this study, I conducted participant observation on three separate 8-week sessions and logged over 120+ hours of fieldwork. I attended both weekends and weekdays in an effort to capture any difference between slow and busy days. Observable data, such as conversation, mannerism, and attire, was recorded through short jottings on a cellphone application with sync software and then transferred to a Word document. These jottings were either descriptive (d) or reflexive (r). If electronic jotting was not possible, I used a notebook, pen, and other writing materials to make small jottings of observations that were fully developed later.

Immediately after the end of the day, all jottings and recordings were fully developed into full fieldnotes in a Word document. The field notes were stored in a file marked by a date on the UW HIPAA compliant OneDrive cloud service for safekeeping. At no point was any identifiable feature collected to assure the safety and confidentiality of all participants. Similarly, pseudonyms were also used instead of participants' actual names to protect confidentiality.

Data Analysis

The “constant comparative method” or grounded theory approach was developed through the collaboration of two sociologists, Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, in a study of dying patients (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Later, in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Glaser and Strauss (1967) propose grounded theory as a systematic qualitative practice that is able to hold its own logic and generate its own theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) define grounded theory as the “discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research” (p. 2). In other words, a qualitative systematic inductive practice that supports a theory through the evidence arising from the data collected.

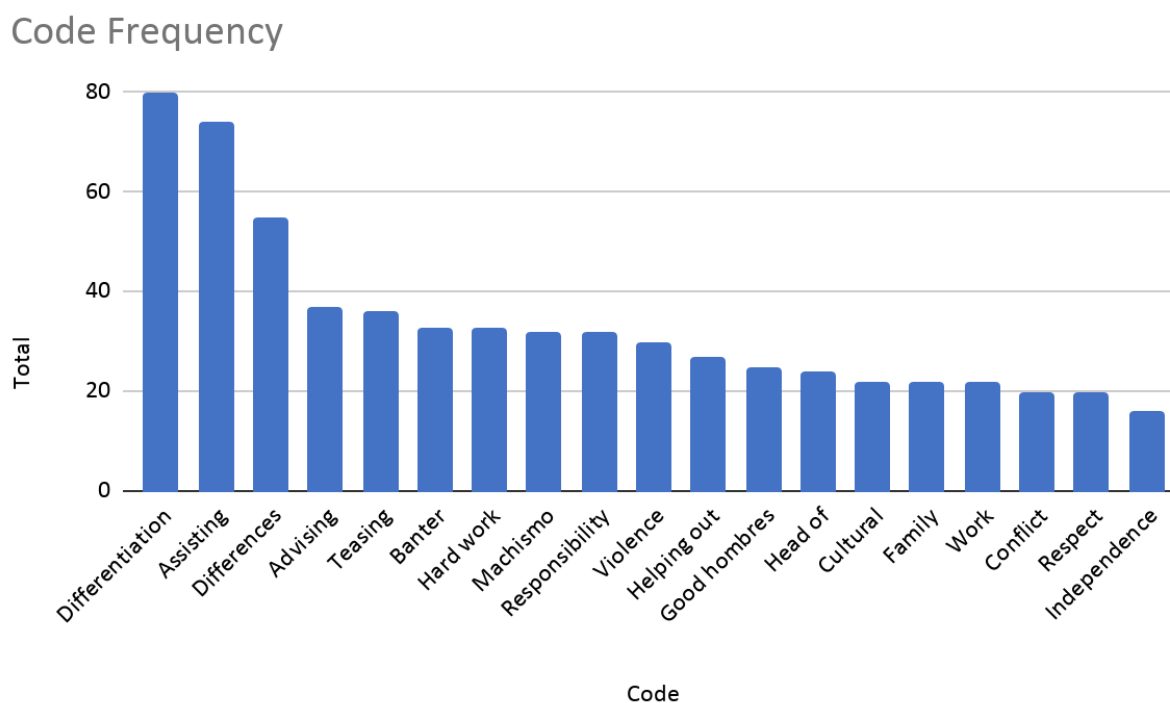
The grounded theory approach involves constant comparison of data and systematic steps for collecting, analyzing, integrating and conceptualizing qualitative data (Charmaz, 2006). The grounded theory process starts with the researcher asking questions regarding some phenomena of social life. The researcher moves to the field to gather rich data using naturalistic methods such as participant observation and interviews. After some data has been collected the researcher reviews the data and conducts initial coding teasing out preliminary insights while the data collection process continues (Charmaz, 2006). New information is reviewed and compared with earlier data teasing out important codes and categories that emerge from the information collected. Codes are then grouped together into ideas and categories, then used to develop

theory. The researcher continues to move in and out data collection and analysis process until no new insights emerge from the data.

The grounded theory process also involves several cycles of coding. According to Saldaña, (2016) the grounded theory process includes two key coding cycles (p. 55). The initial phase incorporates labeling each section, or line of the data. This phase involves breaking apart the data into distinct parts, while examining and comparing them for similarities and differences. The second phase, the “focused, selective phase” utilizes the most frequent codes to sort and organize and explain a larger segment of the data. According to Saldaña (2016) the main goal of second cycle coding is to “develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical organization” from the initial coding phase (p. 234). In other words, the initial coding cycle is reorganized and reconsolidated creating a select list of broader categories, themes or concepts.

The grounded theory approach is helpful not just because it provides a systematic practice for conducting qualitative research. Also, because it provides the opportunity to progress and produce concepts in the particular setting in which the phenomenon is occurring. Therefore, the concepts or theory are grounded to the experiences it aims to explain. In this case, the grounded theory approach is particularly insightful because it provides an opening to explore the performance of Latino masculinities in the context of a barbershop. Grounded theory is also helpful because it provides an occasion to fill the gap in research from the practices and responses provided by participants themselves.

For this study all the data was coded using HyperRESEARCH software and stored in a HIPAA compliant UW OneDrive folder. The major themes, shown in Figure 1, were loosely associated into one chapter for further exploration.

Figure 1: Code Frequency

Setting: Bacano Barbershop

My study was conducted at Bacano Barbershop, a small Dominican run barbershop that predominantly serves Latino men from the Spanish speaking communities. The barbershop was first opened in 2013, which primarily served the Black community. When the current owner, a

Dominican immigrant, bought the establishment, the barbershop went through an ethnic transformation becoming a site where several Latino men congregate. These men attend the barbershop not just for a haircut but to connect with other men with similar experiences. As a regular customer of the barbershop, I was granted access to observe and interview the barbers at the barbershop by the owner.

Bacano Barbershop is just south of the City of Tacoma, which is a midsize urban area with a population of 217,827 people. The city may be understood as an extension of the City of Seattle with a much denser population. Current Census data estimates that Latinos are the largest ethnic minority group in Tacoma, making up about 11.9% of the total population (*U.S. Census Bureau*, 2019). From this population the largest group within the Latino community are people of Mexican heritage (*U.S. Census Bureau*, 2019). The rest are Latino groups from different regions such as the Caribbean and South Americans, who make up a small minority of this population.

Much like the Black barbershop, Bacano Barbershop is a place that men go for haircuts and for the company of other men. Bacano Barbershop is a space where Latino men can voice their frustration, talk about politics, women, sports, banter, and joke without fear of societal repercussions. Most men who frequent the barbershop are happy to attend and enjoy the ability to talk Spanish and feast on unique versions of food, for example “arroz con gandules.” Inside the barbershop loud salsa, merengue, bachata, or reggaetón music plays on the speakers. But the conversations are never hindered because they are usually louder than the music itself.

At Bacano Barbershop Latino men are usually offered a Corona or Modelo beer by the barbers until their turn comes along. Then when seated, men get the opportunity to bond with their barbers through private chat, gossiping, and homosocial rituals to put on the public

masculine face. When the transformation is over most men stay for hours continuing the bantering, joking, and socialization. Major events that take place within the barbershop are the interactions between members of the community and the interactions between the barber themselves.

Subjectivities

In qualitative studies, the researcher is the primary data gathering instrument. Therefore, it is important that the researcher indicates any biases, values and other personal experiences that may shape any interpretation of the study. In this case my perceptions of Latino masculinities are shaped by personal experience. As a Latino male who was brought up in the United States since age eight, I always found myself struggling to define myself in accordance to a hypermasculine Latino macho. I was born and raised in a Cuban household with traditional gender roles, so in my childhood when I failed to perform proper male behavior, I was violently disciplined. My heaviest memory is during preschool in Cuba when my grandfather found me painting my nails with polish. He yelled, grabbing my father's attention. Furious, my father snatched me by the arm, pulling me into the living room as he undid his belt. He then proceeded to lash me so ruthlessly that I can still hear the loud cracks of the straps on my back and my father's voice yelling: "*los hombre no se pintan las manos!*"¹

Similarly, I was taught that men and women had distinct roles in the household as well as in society. Women did the cooking and maintained the home while men were supposed to be dominating, the breadwinners, and work outside the home. These gender roles were strictly and

¹ Men do not paint their hands!

violently enforced in my household. But this dynamic changed somewhat once I moved to the United States, which required both my parents to work to make ends meet.

The gender dynamics in the United States were somewhat different and less violent, but the traditional conceptions of macho remained salient, especially in areas where Latino culture was dominant such as Miami, Florida. For example, women were still supposed to care for the home while also working as well as being sexual objects for male consumption. So, males were expected to abide by these notions, while also being free to perform sexually outside the bonds of their intimate relationships and were still expected to be dominant within their domestic lives. When certain males failed to meet the macho standards, they were usually ridiculed and alienated from the group. My experiences with Latino masculinities over my lifetime have sensitized me to the ways in which men are supposed to act in Latino culture.

Furthermore, I have been a recurring customer of this particular barbershop since 2016, engaging in personal interactions inside and outside the barbershop with both the barbers and customers. I've witnessed multiple instances where Latino men behave, act and speak in ways that clearly mark them as belonging to the dominant gender order. For example, I've been present for verbal conflicts between the barbers and customers where one attempts to dominate the other. I've also been a part of typical male conversation around topics of sports, women and other male ambitions as making a six-figure salary or owning luxury goods. These experiences make me particularly adept at noticing instances when men attempt to mark themselves as belonging to the dominant gender group. By paying attention to the ways in which men talk, behave, and perform their identity for the world, one can tell when they claim membership to the dominant group, especially regarding gender relations.

Chapter 3

Adaptive Masculinities

One early Thursday afternoon the barbers at Bacano barbershop were discussing a client's action of opening the car door for his partner after leaving the barbershop. Daniel sees the gesture first and, in a joking, manner comments:

Daniel: *mira papo eso es lo que tu debes estar haciendo. (laughs)*²

Emmanuel: *ese es un maricon! Yo no hago nada de eso!*

Alfredo: *como que maricon!?! Ese es tremendo tipo!*

Emmanuel: *yo si no hago nada de eso! Yo no soy como Daniel que tiene que lavar y limpiar en su casa como una dama. (laughs)*

Daniel: *a veces ayudo a mi mujer, con los platos y eso cuando tengo tiempo. No tiene nada que ver.! Y mi mujer trabaja también y trae dinero, so yo puedo ayudar!*

William: *papo no le gusta ayudar en la casa! Nama quiere que se lo hagan todo y la mujer trabajando como una mula (laughs)*

Alfredo: *hay que ayudar en la casa, la mujer no deben de estar haciendo todo!*

² When providing an example of the participants' responses I'm going to present them in Spanish and will offer translation in the footnotes.

Emmanuel: *yo hago algo cuando tengo tiempo con los plato y eso. Pero eso es trabajo de las mujeres, pa' eso me case*³

This conversation about what constitutes proper male chivalrous behavior and women's work is an example of how the values the barbers from Bacano barbershop brought with them from Latina America come into conflict with economic and domestic realities in the United States. It shows how the men have adapted into a new context where the nature of their economic circumstance makes it so they have to conform to new gender dynamics.

As a consequence of migration, the men who make up the staff of Bacano barbershop reframe and redefine Latino masculinities in an effort to better assimilate into U.S. culture without entirely letting go of the Latino heritage that they grew up within the Dominican Republic. In the setting of the barbershop, different styles of masculinities come into conflict within the U.S. socio-cultural and political landscape. However, in Latino culture, there are unique values that men are expected to live up to, for example, Machismo and Caballerismo (Arciniega et al., 2008). Machismo is understood to be the negative side of Latino masculinity. Machismo is masculinity that involves hypermasculine characteristics such as aggression, dominance, control over women (Ojeda & Piña-Warson, 2014, p. 106) and sexism (Henry, 2017,

³ Daniel: Look Papo that's what you should be doing. (laughs)

Emmanuel: That's a fag! I don't do any of that!

Alfredo: what do you mean fag!?! That is a tremendous gentleman!

Emmanuel: I do not do any of that! I am not like Daniel who has to wash and clean in his house like a lady. (laughs)

Daniel: Sometimes I help my wife with the dishes and that when I have time. It has nothing to do with it.! And my wife works too, so I can help!

William: Papo doesn't like helping around the house! He wants all done for him and then his woman working like a mule (laughs)

Alfredo: you have to help around the house, the woman shouldn't be doing everything!

Emmanuel: I do something when I have time with the dishes and that. But that's women's work, that's why I got married

p.21). On the other side of machismo is Caballerismo, which is understood to be the positive side of Latino masculinities. Caballerismo is associated with traits such as “nurturance, social responsibility, and emotional closeness” (Ojeda & Piña-Watson, 2014, p. 289). In this chapter, I argue that the men who make up the staff at Bacano barbershop recontextualize Latino masculinities which in turn assume new shapes in the U.S. which I theorize as “adaptive masculinities.”

Gender and Racialized Differentiation

The men at Bacano barbershop perform culturally specific standards of masculinity while positioning themselves and others in their social circle based on Western models. Although there are some similarities regarding the characteristics and values of masculinity in the world, each culture has their own expectations of how masculinity is expressed. In more Westernized models masculinities are often defined using terms like assertiveness, courage, independence, leadership, and strength (Kimmel, 1997). This view emphasizes male authority that is free from repercussions or obligations to behave in a manner that is concerned about the consequences of their actions. Therefore, the barbers perform adaptive masculinities in ways that allow them to appear as gentlemen who have assimilated into Western cultural contexts.

The barbers at Bacano attempt to emulate white Western standards of masculinities by presenting themselves as civilized gentlemen with full control of their masculine identity. Therefore, they are able to project the image that they can protect others weaker than themselves. However, because of their darker skin and longstanding prejudices, they still cannot achieve the kind of economic and social power afforded to Western men within a white masculine dominated

society because they are viewed as men of color. Thus, they actively seek to distance themselves from negative stereotypes associated with masculinities performed by people of color, particularly those that are related to interactions with women.

The Men in Bacano Barbershop

In this section, I cover two questions that each barber in my study has responded to. These questions were “qué significa ser hombre?”⁴ and “qué significa ser macho?”⁵ The first question was asked to elicit general conceptions of gender and masculinity and the second question was asked to elicit culturally specific concepts of gender and masculinity. Here I describe the responses and some patterns in their perspectives in relation to Western masculine norms. The men listed here, Alfredo, Daniel, Mario, and William, approached these questions in similar ways by describing Western masculine norms and prosocial ways of being a man.

Alfredo

Alfredo is the owner of the Bacano barbershop. He is a 5-foot eleven-inch, slim build, dark-skinned, Latino male in his late thirties. He was born and raised in the Dominican Republic where he lived until his early twenties. Alfredo then moved to Puerto Rico with his mother where he learned to become a barber. He then moved to Washington State in the late 2010s where he bought a barbershop and began his business. When asked “qué significa ser un hombre?” Alfredo responded:

⁴ What does it mean to be a man?

⁵ What does it mean to be macho?

*Ser un hombre es... ser buen padre, ser bueno con tu mama y tu papa, con las persona, con los animales, con todo. Ser hombre es ser responsable con su amistades, con su mama, con su papa, con los hijo, con con la mujer, y en el trabajo. Ser capaz de... producir lo que tu necesitas.*⁶

Here he describes fatherhood and responsibility to others, especially family, as being key characteristics of being a man. Alfredo's statement derives from the Latino cultural value of familismo which stresses the collective importance, commitment, and solidarity of both immediate and extended family (Marín & Marín, 1991). He also mentions that each nation has its own way of interpreting and defining the term macho as well as what constitutes manhood varies across contexts and cultures, particularly in Latina America.

Alfredo takes it a step further by adding that being a man means someone that produces what they need in life. He speaks about manhood in terms of the Western norms of independence and the ability to create something that will provide a respectable living for his family. When asked, "que significa ser macho?" Alfredo answered:

*macho pa' mi es... ser una persona fuerte, si tu vas a levantar algo pesado y tú la levantas pa mi eso es macho. También macho es otra cosa, una gente dominante. una gente que le da golpe a las mujeres.... cada país tiene una forma de interpretar la palabra macho.*⁷

⁶ Being a man is... being a good father, being good to your mother and father, to people, to animals, to everything. To be a man is to be responsible with your friends, with your mother, with your father, with your children, with your wife, and at work. Being able to ... produce what you need.

⁷ Macho for me is... to be a strong person, if you are going to lift something heavy and you lift it for me that is Macho. Also macho is something else, a dominant person. A person who hits women... Each country has a way of interpreting the word macho.

In this quotation, Alfredo explains that being macho is to be a physically strong person, using the example of lifting something heavy, to him that makes you a macho. According to Alfredo's definition of the term, macho is someone who is unnecessarily dominating and violent towards women. During my interview with Alfredo, he complained about the amount of power women in the U.S. have and how they can be verbally abusive towards men. Indeed, Alfredo admitted to me that he is often verbally abused by his wife. Similarly, it is interesting to note that despite having been raised using a language that is very gendered, that when Alfredo discusses the idea of who is abusive in a relationship, he uses gender neutral language. He specifically says person not man or men, or even women.

Daniel

Daniel is a barber that is always concerned about his appearance. He could usually be seen wearing name brand clothing and the latest sneakers such as Jordan's. Daniel is a 5-foot six inches, medium build, 170-pound, light-skinned Latino male in his late thirties. He was born and raised in the Dominican Republic where he lived until his late twenties. He crossed the Mona Passage from the island of Hispaniola to Puerto Rico in the early 2000s and has lived in several states in the U.S. before moving to Washington State in 2004. Daniel is married to a U.S. citizen and is in the process of acquiring his own citizenship. When asked, "que significa ser hombre?" Daniel replied:

[Ser hombre es] como trabajar, proteger su familia, su esposa, sus hijo, su mama... todo lo que sea familia y trabajar duro pa echar pa lante pa que pa dar un buen futuro a su

*familia.*⁸

In this selection, Daniel claims that to be a man is to be the protector of the family, including his extended family. According to Daniel, being a man means having employment and working hard in order to provide his family with a good future. Daniel describes Westernized⁹ notions of masculinity such as protector, provider, physically strong, aggressive, and competitive. There is also the “alpha” idea, often thought to be the framework of masculinity. This has been further enforced in recent years, examples include the muscular athletes, charismatic men in popular culture both Western and Latino as well as hypersexual. This is somewhat different from the notions of manhood from that he brought with him from the Dominican Republic, such as caring for the collective and for the community. When asked, “que significa ser macho?”¹⁰ Daniel replied

*[Macho es] aquel que tiene a su mujer, pues en su casa. Se piensa que es el único que tiene derecho en hacer lo que le da la gana el único que tiene decisiones. Si tiene a su esposa no la deja que se independice ella, quiere tenerla en la casa to el tiempo. Igual a los hijos cuando viven con ellos.*¹¹

⁸ [Being a man is] like working, protecting your family, your wife, your children, your mother ... everything that is family and working hard to take the time to give your family a good future

⁹ The Western definition of masculinity finds its roots in the hunter-gatherer roles of primitive male homosapiens: to be masculine means to be physically strong, aggressive, and competitive. This “alpha” ideal, thought to be the pique of masculinity, has only been further enforced in recent years, as most common examples of masculinity are limited to brawny athletes, charismatic actors, and virile sex-symbols. In this study, Western masculinities refers to white Anglo-American norms and hegemonic masculinity, so I will use them interchangeably throughout this thesis.

¹⁰ What does it mean to be macho?

¹¹ [Macho is] the one who has his wife, at home. He thinks that he is the only one who has the right to do what he wants, the only one who has decisions. If he has his wife, he does not let her become independent, he wants to have her in the house at the same time. Just like children when they live with them.

He says that macho men are those who believe they have the right to do what they want when they want. One example would be that Westernized masculinities are more materially-driven, and macho masculinity is more about controlling women, which is a holdover of more Latina American forms of performing masculinity than what Daniel was raised with.

Another example of this phenomenon is how Daniel conceptualizes macho men as being in total control, the main decision-makers. In Daniel's view, the macho man forces their wives and children to stay home while they deal with the outside world, as opposed to a more egalitarian view, one that includes concepts such as dual breadwinners and shared responsibilities.

William

William is the oldest person from this group, he is usually the loudest, the most comical and can spring into dance at any moment. William is a 5-foot seven-inch, medium build, 180-pound, dark-skinned Latino male in his mid-forties. He was born in the Dominican Republic where he lived until his early twenties, then immigrated to Puerto Rico where he remained until he was in his late thirties. During his time in Puerto Rico, William worked and owned a barbershop with his brother Alfredo. He then sold his barbershop and moved to The United States in search of a better future in 2018. He started working at Bacano barbershop once he arrived, finding that this kind of labor provided some economic stability because he could earn money and be in control of his future. When asked, "que significa ser hombre?"¹² William replied:

¹² What does it mean to be a man?

Ser hombre es tener responsabilidad, contigo mismo y con tus hijos, con tu esposa, con tu familiares, con la sociedad.¹³

William claims that to be a man is to have both familial and social responsibilities such as being a leader in the community, provider, protector, and role model, particularly when it comes to his immediate family, but also his larger extended family and in his immediate community of Dominican compatriots. Thus, in contrast to Daniel, William still views extended family and community obligations largely through his experiences of growing up in the Dominican Republic. When asked, *Que significa ser macho?* William replied:

macho es... el masculinismo ser hombre, macho... es una forma de decir hombre. El machismo es otra cosa... como que es como un hombre que quiere tener a la mujer pisoteada y que quiere que la mujer haga lo que él diga.¹⁴

In Westernized terms, William explains that macho is another way of saying man. To help in translating the concept of his own worldview, he explains that macho is more about embodiment, who he is, whereas machismo is more of an abstract conceptualization of his views around masculine ideals. He describes a man who is dominating over the women in his life, a man who must have authority at all times.

Mario

¹³ To be a man is to have responsibility, with yourself and with your children, with your wife, with your relatives, with society.

¹⁴ Macho is... masculinism being a man, macho... is a way of saying, man. Machismo is another thing... It's like a man who wants to have the woman trampled and who wants the woman to do what he says.

Mario is a former baseball player from the Dominican Republic who immigrated to the United States in 2019. Mario is a 6-foot five-inch, large build, 220-pound, very dark-skinned Latino male in his mid-thirties. He was born and raised in the Dominican Republic where he lived until his early thirties. While in the DR, Mario had many impressionable life experiences, such as his Catholic upbringing, many of which still influence his behavior and thinking to this day around what makes a man. He was acculturated by his own father into thinking about what did and did not constitute proper masculinity. Much of Mario's ingrained thinking about masculinity and his role is greatly influenced by his childhood and his strict Catholic upbringing. Mario alone among the men of the barbershop expressed any interest or influence of religion in his life.

To Mario, being responsible and taking care of his obligations is of paramount important to his identity as a man. This path ultimately led Mario to becoming a barber during his early twenties finding that this kind of labor provided an easier way to make a living. When asked, "que significa ser hombre?"¹⁵ Mario replied:

*ser un hombre para mi es una persona responsable... que asume toda sus responsabilidades. Como... ser la cabeza de la casa, sabes que el hombre.... de algún modo tiene como un escalón más alto [que la mujer]... y la masculinidad es todo eso. Ser responsable... asumir todas sus responsabilidades, eso para mi es la masculinidad.*¹⁶

In this quote, he declares that men are in some sense superior to women because of their

¹⁵ What does it mean to be a man?

¹⁶ Being a man for me is a responsible person... who assumes all his responsibilities. Like... being the head of the house, you know that man... somehow has a higher step [than woman]... and masculinity is all that. Being responsible... assuming all your responsibilities, that for me is masculinity.

masculinity. As a result of this, they must be willing to assume what he sees as their responsibilities as men, such as being the head of the household. Here Mario describes Western masculine norms and traits such as leadership, superiority, and male responsibility. He uses the word responsibility repeatedly, indicating that to Mario that is the ultimate characteristic of manhood. When asked, “*què significa ser macho?*” Mario replied:

para mi... un macho, un varón es un hombre, hombre-hombre que no se dobla de ninguna forma. tu sabes que dios no se equivoca. Dios hizo hombre y mujer.¹⁷

Here Mario responds to this question by explaining that a macho is a hyper-masculine man who never fractures. He takes it further by mentioning his Catholic upbringing and saying that God does not make mistakes. The Catholic Church is a pillar of modern patriarchy. An example of this is when Mario is describing Western masculine patterns, he often refers to traits such as being unbending, a leader, someone who is responsible. In Latina America, the outsized influence of the Catholic Church cannot be discounted. Mario is a direct product of an upbringing immersed in Catholic orthodoxy.

Prosocial Understandings of What It Means to be a Man

The previous section sought to introduce the men in the barbershop and their responses to the questions “*qué significa ser hombre?*”¹⁸ and “*qué significa ser macho?*”¹⁹ aiming to capture how the men conceptualize masculinity. All of the participants from the individual interviews,

¹⁷ for me ... a male is a man, man-man who does not bend in any way. You know that God is not wrong. God made man and woman.

¹⁸ What does it mean to be a man?

¹⁹ What does it mean to be macho?

when asked “qué significa ser hombre?”, described Western masculine norms such as leadership, heterosexuality, fatherhood, strength, guidance, role modeling, providing, and protecting. None of the barbers associated negative qualities to being masculine. However, when asked “qué significa ser macho? Most men describe aggression, dominance, and violence towards women which will be discussed below, traits that are commonly associated with machismo (Arciniega, 2008). Only one participant, Luis,²⁰ described macho the same way he defined manhood as the head of household and the one who looks over and protects others in the household.

The descriptions of manhood above are prosocial understandings of what it means to be a man. By prosocial I mean behavior that is helpful and meant to be of benefit to others. However, the way the men describe macho and machismo and the ideas that they are in control, and their authority remains unchallenged. Therefore, these are masculinities formed around the remnant of machismo, tempered by the material necessity of their realities. The men attempt to emulate Western masculinity, but the struggles of migration disadvantage them. When immigrating to the United States, gender roles and power dynamics are redefined as the men adjust to new norms and necessity. No longer are the men the head of household, they must depend on their spouses to also bring income into the home. The men adopt specific strategies designed to deal with the difficulties in which they construct culturally distinctive forms of masculinity. Necessity becomes a driving force behind the men's redefinition of masculinity. No longer can the men afford to live on the income of a single person. William explains:

“tanto el hombre como la mujer, cualquiera de los dos hacen lo que tiene que hacer para sustentar a su familia y sobrevivir en esta sociedad, no hay exclusividad, no que tu tiene

²⁰ Luis is not one of the main research participants and therefore is only brought up as a contrast to the behaviors of the other main participants in this field research.

que hacer esto, no, cualquiera lo hace, porque lo que estamos tratando es sobrevivir y mantenemos a flote.”²¹

William explains that in this society both the man and the woman must do what they have to, economically, in order to survive. He claims there is no exclusivity in the gender differences when it comes to working. The illustration that William uses is an example of how he and the other men in the barbershop have adapted their masculinities to an entirely different socio-economic context than the one they were raised in.

Different Ways of Performing Masculinities.

In contrast to the masculinities I have explored so far, there is an outlier that warrants his own category. The barbers in the previous section have similar views about manhood. They have prosocial views of what it means to be a man and have in a way adapted to a new context of masculinity while maintaining some fragments of Machismo. However, Emmanuel holds a style of masculinity that looks more like Machismo than the adaptive masculinity that the other men have accommodated. The men at Bacano barbershop often differentiated themselves against Emmanuel to affirm their prosocial masculine status despite having grown up in a similar setting where the masculine practices of Dominican men are ruled by what De Moya, (2000) calls a totalitarian regime.

²¹ Both the man and the woman, both of them, do what they have to do to support their families and survive in this society there is no exclusivity. not that you have to do this. No, everyone does because what we are trying to do is survive, and we keep afloat.

According to De Moya (2000), some of the rules associated with being a man in DR include “He cannot publicly show fear of anything,” and “He should show a vivid and visible erotic interest in all females who come close to him when he is with his peers” (pp. 73–74). Although Emmanuel attempts to perform adaptive masculinities, his attempts do not seem to work within the social contexts in which he had to perform them. He had to make two choices, he could continue to perform the masculinities that he developed as a young man in the Dominican Republic or adapt to a more Westernized standard where power dynamics are shared. Emmanuel’s unwillingness to make this adaptation has cost him his pathway to citizenship. Despite this not being a certainty, in Emmanuel’s mind, he is certain he will ultimately end up back in the Dominican Republic. To him, there is no point in adapting his masculinity at this time or any other.

Emmanuel

Emmanuel is a large man: 6-foot one inch, medium built, 200-pound, light skin Latino male in his early forties. He was born and raised in the Dominican Republic and while there he attended primary school before dropping out and adopting a trade. Growing up in the extreme poverty of the Dominican Republic, Emmanuel received little in the way of formal education beyond primary school because there was never anyone around to teach him. He became a barber at a very young age finding that doing this sort of activity provided an opportunity to make money quickly and easily. Emmanuel lived in the Dominican Republic until his early thirties then immigrated to the United States in the early 2000s. He remembers flying to the United States for the first time; he had a layover in New York, then flew to Washington State where his wife was waiting for him with his first child.

Emmanuel is someone who is always willing to challenge any reduction of his masculine image. This can be derived from Emmanuel's feeling of his masculinity being challenged by intersecting systems of oppression like race, class, and gender (Crenshaw, 1991). As an example, Emmanuel is married to a U.S. citizen while holding a green card. At present, his wife brings in most of the income and pays the majority of the bills. On top of that Emmanuel speaks very little English, enough to communicate with customers but not enough to understand everything he is being told. As a result, Emmanuel feels emasculated; therefore, he exhibits the need to compensate by being overly controlling of the people around him, particularly his wife. His type of aggressive, dominating, hypersexual behavior is typically associated with machista attitudes.

Infidelity and Lack of Control

Emmanuel often talks about women to affirm his masculine status, including mentioning how much he likes going to the club to find and seduce women. He usually speaks about women in relation to his sexual conquests, to Emmanuel they are important to his self-image and status as a dominant male. Within the context of the barbershop, he talks frequently about his sexual conquests in open conversations with his peers.

E: Había una tipa ahí en [Club Latino] y empezó a reírse y mirando pa' mí. Yo fui pa' 'lla y le hablé y le pregunte que me diera su número. La tipa después hizo así y se fue pa el baño y seguía mirandome y riendose. Yo dije 'ah está bien' y la seguí. Ahí mismo en el baño del [Club Latino] se lo di. Después cuando salimos ella me dice que estaba casada y todo eso. Pero yo como si nada.²²

²² There was a girl there at [Club Latino] and she started laughing and looking at me. I went and spoke to her and asked her to give me her number. The girl then did like this and went to the bathroom and kept looking at me and

In this passage, Emmanuel is attempting to mark himself as a man who is active (virile) and dominant (strong, manly) within the gender pecking order of the world he inhabits. Emmanuel believes and often expresses out loud that women are worse than men when it comes to hooking up. This opinion is mostly shared in private when just the men who work there are speaking to one another, but rarely when there is a woman or a child in the room. They have another discourse around women when others are there, generally being more respectful. In his mind, married women are usually “putas”²³ who do not care whether or not they have a husband. He says that it doesn’t matter if they are married when they drink, they all turn into “sluts” and “hoes.”

Emmanuel’s typical discourse around the subject of women can be seen as a way for him to claim and prove his masculinity. By doing this he is presenting himself as an active, dominant member of the gendered order. In addition, he presents himself as someone who has no control over his sexual impulses and therefore must show interest in any woman that shows any potential sexual interest in him. This kind of behavior is in keeping with Pascoe’s study (2007) that came to the conclusion that masculinity is often actively demonstrated through performances (Butler, 1994) of conventional notions of heterosexuality, including the hyper-sexualization of women.

In contrast to Emmanuel, William differentiates himself from other men that he considers too controlling. In a conversation with a female client who endured domestic violence in Puerto Rico, William comments that Puerto Rican men are very possessive that they do not believe in divorce. According to William “*los hombre de allá no creen en divorcio, la mujer es de él*

laughing. I said, ‘ah that’s fine’ and followed her. Right there in the bathroom of the [Club Latino] I gave it to her. Later when we went out, she told me she was married and all that. But I was like nothing.

²³ a woman who has many casual sexual encounters or relationships.

*aunque ella no quiera los hombres allí pueden tener cinco, seis, siete mujeres pero tu eres del solamente.*²⁴ William continues “*los hombre de allá son muy violentos y salvajes que no perdona.*”²⁵ William explains that men from the island of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic do not believe in divorce. He claims that once married the men believe that the women are in possession. In contrast, men can have multiple partners.

William presents men from the island of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic as degenerates who only care to have control over women. Although he is from the island himself, he makes a clear distinction that he is not that type of man. William’s comments reflect his need to differentiate himself from men from the island who he considers cruel because of their need for having several women. Similarly, Luis explains that:

*en este mundo el hombre es el que es infiel y se le aplaude. Pero, si la mujer le es infiel a su pareja ya es una puta, un sin número de palabras malas y ofensivas para la mujer. Pero cuando el hombre lo hace pues entonces se le aplaude, se dice: no, tu eres un duro, tu tienes muchas mujeres eso es bueno. Pero yo no veo es bien, ese tipo de machismo no es bueno.*²⁶

Here Luis explains that whenever men are unfaithful, they are applauded and given props by other men. However, when a woman is unfaithful, they are called “whores” and a variable

²⁴ The men there do not believe in a divorce, the woman is his, even if she does not want to.... men there can have 5, 6, 7 women but you are the only one.

²⁵ The men over there are very violent and wild that they do not forgive.

²⁶ In this world, men are the ones who are unfaithful and are applauded. But, if the woman comes, and she is unfaithful to her partner she is already a whore, a number of bad and offensive words for the woman. But when the man does it, then he is applauded, it is said that you are a tough man, you have many women, that is good. But I do not see it as good, that type of machismo is not good.

number of other offensive words. For Luis, this is a type of machismo that is not good. I attribute this to the fact that Luis has some college whereas the rest of the men have limited education.

Control Over Women and Violence

Emmanuel presents himself as a true macho that will never be dominated by a woman. Emmanuel is often heard saying that the moment a woman would attempt to lay hands on him he would not hesitate to “hurt” her back. He explains “*uno tiene que tener las mujeres controlidatas... si no te cojen ati pa’ bugarron.*”²⁷ In other words, Emmanuel claims that men must have control of their women if they wanted them to be taken as a true man. For him being manly is all about having full control of the women in his life.

Emmanuel's ideas of control over women are particularly evident in his need to be physically dominating. Emmanuel has had legal issues stemming from his need to be physically dominating. He has been charged with domestic violence because he became physically aggressive with his spouse. Emmanuel explains that after a verbal altercation with his wife the police were called, and he was taken into custody after his spouse told the police that he had physically assaulted her. Despite Emmanuel immigrating to the United States he continues to maintain customary macho beliefs like having full control over women. This is something that those within his social circle attempt to separate themselves from.

Unlike Emmanuel, Alfredo explains that losing control and getting violent is something that is not manly like. When asked to give an example of a bad hombre Alfredo tells the story of a time in his childhood when his father lost control with his anger and resorted to violence.

²⁷ One has to have women under control. If not, they will take you as a man who likes to have intercourse with men, where he is the giver, but never the receiver.

“yo estaba jugando ahí en la calle y mi papá llegó tomado y se puso molesto con su pareja, no se por que. Me acuerdo que el agarro la comida y se la tiró y eso yo no lo vi bien, maltratando a su esposa. yo se que eso no es de hombre osea por eso mismo no lo hago ni lo haría, a menos en que sea en defensa propia.”²⁸

Here, Alfredo recounts a time in his childhood when his father became violent with his partner. He tells the story of a moment when his father arrived home drunk and lost control of his anger. This lack of control is something Alfredo did not consider manly like. For that reason, he says that he would never get violent himself unless it was in self-defense. For Alfredo, masculinity seems to be about possessing power, as well as possessing control.

Like Alfredo, Daniel differentiates himself from men who are violent, overly controlling, and oppressive. When asked what the term macho meant to him, Daniel emphasized that:

Yo no me catalogo como macho, o sea para mi es fifty fifty, la mujer y el hombre son igual. La mujer trae dinero igual que el hombre a la casa.²⁹

In this passage, Daniel does not classify himself as macho because of his belief that macho are the men who dominate women and believe that men are superior to them. Daniels' claim to gender equality comes from the differences in the way they must adapt to U.S. culture. No longer are the men in the barbershop the head of the household; they must depend on their partners for

²⁸ I was playing there on the street and my dad came drunk and got mad at his partner, I do not know why. I remember that he grabbed the food and threw it at her and I did not see it well... mistreating his wife. I know that that is not manlike, that is why I do not and would not do it unless it is in self-defense.

²⁹ I do not classify myself as macho. For me it is fifty-fifty, the woman and the man are the same. The woman brings money just like the man to the house.

financial support. I would note that his views may be informed by financial needs. He says Macho to him means men who are controlling, oppressive, and overly dominating. Although he does not classify himself as Macho, Daniel emphasizes that he is the man of the house and is in charge of his household. Despite progressive views of masculinity, Daniel maintains his control over the household particularly his spouse.

Dominican Racialized Masculinities

“The contradiction between public perception and the self-concept of Dominican immigrants is one of their key problems in adapting to American culture” (Duany, 1998).

Race has played a major role in the construction of national identity among Dominicans, particularly in opposition to Haitians with whom they share an island. Dominicans have defined themselves as “Hispanic” and “white” while labeling their Haitian neighbors, as “Black.” However, when Dominican immigrants arrive in the U.S., they find themselves in a new system of social stratification where they are racialized. Dominicans, like other Caribbean immigrants, move from a three-tier racial system, Black, white, and mixed, to a binary racial system in the U.S. As a result of migration to the U.S., gendered and racialized identities tend to mutate because migrants must enter new systems of social stratification, as shown here by Mario.

tu sabes que soy un hombre de piel oscura, soy un hombre negro, y tu sabes que los hombres negros tienen mucha actitud, y... en mi país los tratan de que como machista porque... hacen muchas cosas... pero yo no soy así.³⁰

In this statement, Mario acknowledges that he is a man of color, specifically a Black man. He continues by expressing that Black men have “a lot of attitude,” particularly when it comes to aggression and violence. As a consequence of their behavior, Black men are treated differently in the Dominican Republic, which often is labeled as machista because of the norms of behavior they perform. Mario continues and claims “I am not like that.” He believes that Black men in the DR both act and are treated differently because of their skin color. However, he also recognizes that there are common stereotypes associated with Blackness and he tries to distance himself from Blackness. Like most white Americans, the men of Bacano have bought into the negative stereotypes of male Blackness, such as that of a “brute, untamed, uncivilized, unthinking and unfeeling” (hooks, 2003, p. xii). For that reason, they are not particularly eager to be grouped into the same social category as Black men.

In the Dominican Republic, having dark skin is often an obstacle to achieving higher social status. For that reason, the men at Bacano barbershop tend to reject their African heritage while embracing their European ancestry. This distancing is evident in Mario’s claim about his own lineage; he often tells the story of the legacy of his grandparents, who according to him, immigrated from England and settled in the DR. He mentions knowing this because his mother was an avid English speaker that was often in communication with family members around the Caribbean islands who were also of European descent. Mario claims that this is all he has been

³⁰ You know that I am a dark-skinned man, I am a Black man, and you know that Black men have a lot of attitude, and ... in my country, they are treated as a machista because... they do many things. but I'm not like that.

taught about his family members, he was never taught anything about his African ancestry, and he has no personal stories, just fragments of memories.

Here Mario is well aware of the stereotypes associated with being Black in a society that values light skin, particularly the stereotypes associated with aggression and violence. Despite being a visibly Black man, he attempts to distance himself from Blackness by emphasizing his white ancestry. He holds on to values associated with whiteness preferred in the racial hierarchy. Mario attempts to differentiate himself from other Black men, particularly from the Dominican Republic, because he perceives them to be more violent and often savage men.

Intersectional Masculinities

In the U.S., the men of Bacano barbershop find themselves performing a more intersectional version of masculinities than they would in the Dominican Republic. That is because in the U.S. views about gender are often conflated with those of race and vice versa. Similarly, according to Duany (1998), in both the U.S. and PR, Dominicans encounter additional intense stigmatization, stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination that all people of African origin are already subjected to. Therefore, indicating that their participation in U.S. society has been limited.

In an interview with Daniel, he tells me when he first arrived at the barbershop to work, another barber who was Black took him under his wing and taught him how to interact with customers in English, but also how to interact with police officers as a man of color. Daniel explains: *El me enseñó como tengo que hacer para estar bien con la policía. Me dijo que*

*siempre le diga 'Sir' y que nunca escondiera las manos.*³¹ He expressed that this was the most valuable lesson he ever learned at the barbershop as he discovered that the police in the U.S. treat people of color differently. He commented that having to learn how to deal with the police was the first time that he felt like a person of color in the U.S.

According to Alfredo one thing that is rarely talked about in the barbershop is skin color because they do not want to offend anyone. However, this is not necessarily the case because they often speak about race among themselves and in ways that others cannot understand. For example, the men in Bacano barbershop refer to white individuals as *pata blanca* (white foot) and tend to discuss how cheap they are when it comes to leaving tips after haircuts. There is also a common perception that many white people are drug addicts who are always looking for trouble. I would like to note that of the many topics discussed within the barbershop in my presence and those that were relayed to me, but I did not personally witness, race was one of the least frequently discussed topics. They did not talk about it, however, they performed white masculinities the most frequently discussed topics were politics, sports, and women.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

This research seeks to understand how Latino men perform masculinities in the context of the barbershop. The findings of this analysis have shown that the men from Bacano barbershop perform masculinities in adaptive ways in order to better assimilate into U.S. society.

³¹ He taught me how I have to interact with the police. He told me to always say 'Sir' and never hide my hands

Several factors are at play when considering the challenges of migration that had a large impact on how the men of Bacano barbershop perform masculinities. The barbers at Bacano barbershop accomplish their masculinities by adapting their worldview and deviating from existing gendered and racialized stereotypes in the U.S. in both the media and broader socio-cultural contexts. One example would be that Latino men are womanizers, violent, and generally lacking a moral compass. They enact adaptive masculinities that are functional within the model of machismo while at the same time rejecting most of its toxic components.

This is a consequence of living in transnational spaces such as those discussed in Anzaldúa's borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987). The men do not just learn to navigate two cultures but create a third space where hybridization of masculine practices take shape. The men must recontextualize their gendered (and racialized) identities and practices in order to better acculturate into Western standards of behavior that are more socio-economically appropriate, while simultaneously retaining as much of their identity that is rooted in the distinct cultural practices and behaviors of Latino masculinity, such as Caballerismo.

Migration and Transnational Spaces

The men in Bacano barbershop must adapt to living according to U.S. cultural standards while also wanting to remain faithful to their Latino customs. In other words, they encounter an internal dilemma where they must walk the line between living according to U.S. norms and maintaining Latino norms and traditions. Similarly, the men also suffer from intersecting systems of oppression such as race, class, and gender, all of which create conflicts that compel them to consider issues such as women's roles, as well as the power differentials between the two binary genders, female and male. Some of the men have also become much more aware of the language

they use outside the barbershop so as to not stand out in public. Such is the case with Alfredo that after going to the grocery store with his spouse a white person yelled at them to “go back to your country” and “We speak English in America.” So now whenever he goes out in public, he is more conscious of what language he uses when communicating with others. It is these kinds of adaptations both within the home, their private world, and what exists outside of it are often necessary for them to navigate and inhabit two spaces, which pushes them to create a hybridization of cultures, a kind of transnational, third culture, a transnational space, in this case, the Bacano barbershop.

While in this space it is safe for them to perform Latino masculinities within the space of the barbershop--one where it is ok to speak in Spanish and drink beer with friends while you're getting a haircut--in their private realities they are often powerless. This goes in line with Carrigan's (1985) and Butler's (1990) conceptualizations of gender being a social script performed for others that is influenced by who is there and where they are. However, outside of the barbershop, the lines and distinctions between Latino and Westernized standards of acceptable masculinity are less clear.

The men have had to adapt their masculine practices from their Catholic upbringing and the Church's narrow view of masculinity to a very pro-social view which includes equitable power-sharing within intimate relationships. To accomplish this they have adapted their masculine practices in ways that they can empower them to feel some form of power in a context of powerlessness. The men have little choice but to accommodate to a setting where power dynamics are shared or run the risk of jeopardizing their immigration status along with other possible negative consequences including economic and social.

Adaptive Masculinities

As Hurtado and Singa (2016) note, Latino men inhabit a unique intersectional position within the U.S. context. Therefore, they are disadvantaged on multiple levels because they are Spanish speakers, immigrants, and have low socioeconomic status among other disadvantages such as education, high incarceration rates, and more challenges in the employment market. As a result of these intersecting systems of oppression and the fact that the men must learn to live in distinct spaces Latino men develop what Anzaldúa calls a “hybrid consciousness” (1987) that is adaptive to the multiple contradictions in the world that they now must inhabit. The men in this study illustrated this sort of adaptive behavior in the U.S. context as they attempt to assimilate to white Westernized culture.

The barbers in this study described manhood in prosocial ways, however, their authority that is derived from having male power and privilege still remains the same from where they were raised. They still maintain some sort of control by exercising their power as head of the household through managing the finances and making sure all of the major utilities and rentals were in their name. Therefore, these are masculinities formed around the remnant of machismo, but that are hindered by the material necessity of their realities such as needing a dual-income household.

Because Latino men must adapt to live in a world that disenfranchises them, they must rely on their peers for various forms of support. For example, the men at Bacano barbershop often have to lend money and other amenities to be able to make ends meet. Therefore, through their collaboration and support they create a supportive community to handle the challenges of migration that arise together.

Barbershop as Cultural Performance Space.

Just like the Black barbershops discussed by Alexander (2003), Marowa-Wilkerson (2014) and Shabazz, (2016), Bacano barbershop serves as a kind of cultural performance space for the exchange and transmission of cultural values, support, and practices. It is a place where young boys come of age into manhood, and where Latino men are able to openly communicate. The men in the barbershop must put on a cultural performance by speaking in Spanish and talking about politics back from their nation of origin and bantering.

Several scholars from disciplines as diverse as psychology and sociology have proposed that humor can function as a means to build group cohesion (Burbach & Babbitt, 1993; Crawford, 2003; Lynch, 2010). For example, Burbach and Babbitt (1993) explain that “humor is a means of building in-group solidarity” (p. 7). Crawford (2003) adds that humor often functions to create solidarity and build intimacy among women. This indicates that humor is a means by which relationships are formed and even strengthened between groups of people. Therefore, humor functions as a way to create cohesion, commonality, and solidarity between members of the “ingroup” within a particular setting. In the context of the barbershop, the members of the ingroup are not just the barbers, but also several clients are included who come from other distinct Latina American cultures, and it even includes some women. Within the Bacano barbershop, the ingroup’s banter tends to revolve around commonalities between heritage and cultural practices. Similarly, the banter that happens at Bacano barbershop between men and women has a tendency to reinforce gender norms rather than challenge them.

Although banter was a frequent theme in my study, time constraints did not permit me to further develop these themes. Future research should consider developing the discourse on

humor and bantering further, which offers exciting possibilities for a deeper understanding on distinctly Latino masculinities.

Contributions

This thesis contributes to already existing theories of masculinities with one example being hegemonic masculinities and its relationship to subordinate masculinities. The concept of hegemonic masculinities explains men's power over women and other men within patriarchal societies (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Adaptive masculinities sheds light on the practices employed by men to maintain their power in a system that has reduced their privileged position. Latino masculinities are subordinate to Western masculinities in the hegemonic model. However, the adaptive masculinities I theorize are complicit within the hegemonic model because of their strategic and adaptive nature. The men in my study adapted their masculinities in ways that allowed them to maintain some power within the context of their actual lived experiences of powerlessness. For example, despite the fact that participants in my study depend on their spouses to bring income into the family, the men maintain control of the bank accounts and often made sure that all fiduciary and property matters were in their name. This assured them of their dominant status as head of the household. Rather than being a fixed phenomenon, their masculinities will keep adapting and evolving as new circumstances emerge in order to reap the benefits associated with manhood in the United States.

The study also shows that rather than masculinity being a settled concept, masculinities can and often are adapted within given situations as the need arises. Any gendered (or racialized) performance can be adapted, but at the same time, by its nature, it suggests an evolving process of change, not a static moment in time. It also contributes to the expanding literature surrounding

Latino masculine gender performance, specifically within spaces such as barbershops, bars, clubs, and other kinds of social gathering spaces that can sometimes include other ethnic groups. Moreover, this study is helpful with analyzing how these adaptive concepts are useful in broadening our understanding of the social construction of masculine bodies and identities by Latino men within transnational spaces. It is also helpful for analyzing the motivations and phenomena related to individuals who have multiple intersectional identities, which all of the men in this study had. It deepens our understanding of how gender is performed by people and how culture impacts that performance.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Like all studies, this study too had its limitations. First, a clear limitation was the small sample size, only six participants from the Dominican Republic, who presently reside in Tacoma, Washington, which indicates that findings may not be generalizable to other geographies, populations or ethnic groups. Future geographic, gender studies, and sociological research into Latino masculinities should consider including men from distinct cultural sub-groups in order to better identify the differences in how men conceptualize and perform masculinities within a variety of socio-cultural as well as transnational contexts. Another limitation was that the participants were aware of the nature of my study, indicating that they could have acted in ways that could influence the outcome of the study. A third limitation was that this study just focused on the barbers and entirely ignored the perspective of the clients. Future research should consider including the perspective of clients in their study to further understand how masculinities is

performed by other groups of men. My study was also limited by time and the COVID-19 pandemic, which prevented me from returning to participants to discuss the results of my study.

Barbershops are popular in the Black community and this has led to an increasing interest in barbershop studies within various academic disciplines. However, because the focus has remained so much on the Black community when discussing the role of barbershops, little attention has been paid to how other ethnicities, such as Latinx, use barbershops as community gathering spaces and the vital role they play within the Latino community. To date, only two studies have used Latino barbershops to show their overall importance to the community at large. Barbershops serve significant functions in the Black community such as being a discursive space, one where knowledge and culture is passed down through teaching and community building. Future studies should consider locations other than barbershops that people of Latino descent congregate in to capture the variety of ways in which Latino men perform masculinities.

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