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Proceso de Aceptación de la Homosexualidad y la Homofobia Asociados a la Conducta Suicida en Varones Homosexuales

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Acceptance of Homosexuality and Homophobia Associated with Suicidal Behavior among Homosexual Men

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Abstract

The gay males committed suicide 2 to 3 times more than heterosexual males. The study aims were to describe and to understand the existential process of the homophobia, its effects in the process of acceptance / denial of the homosexual orientation, associated with the suicidal behaviors in gay males; and to identify risk factors and protectors of suicidal behavior. It was a qualitative, descriptive and comparative study, with 3 gay males with suicide attempt and 4 gay males without suicidal history, by means of in-depth interviews on: sexual orientation, social networks, homophobia and suicidal behavior. There was identified that the homophobia in the family has a major negative effect on the psychic resources of the gay male, it is based on the hegemonic masculinity; united to the homophobic bullying they were fundamental elements for the development of the internalized homophobia. The family and peers' supports were identified as protection factors to diminish the negative effects of the homophobia and to promote the positive identification and the self-acceptance of the homosexual orientation. In conclusion, the familial homophobia and the family rejection to the homosexual disclosure are aspects associated with the suicidal behavior in gay males.

Keywords: suicide behavior, homosexuality, homophobia, hegemonic masculinity

Proceso de Aceptación de la Homosexualidad y la Homofobia Asociados a la Conducta Suicida en Varones Homosexuales

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Resumen

Los varones homosexuales muestran 2 a 3 veces más probabilidad de suicidarse en comparación con sus pares heterosexuales. El objetivo del trabajo fue describir y comprender el proceso vivencial de la homofobia, sus efectos en el proceso de aceptación/negación de la orientación homosexual, asociada con el comportamiento suicida en varones homosexuales; e identificar factores de riesgo y protectores de la conducta suicida. Fue un estudio cualitativo, descriptivo y comparativo, con 3 varones homosexuales con intento de suicidio y 4 varones homosexuales sin antecedentes suicidas, mediante entrevistas a profundidad sobre: orientación sexual, redes sociales, homofobia y conducta suicida. Se identificó que la homofobia en la familia es la que repercute de mayor manera en los recursos psíquicos del homosexual, sustentada en “ideales” de la masculinidad hegemónica; aunado al acoso escolar homófobo fueron elementos fundamentales para el desarrollo de la homofobia internalizada. Se identificaron los apoyos de familiares y pares como factores de protección para disminuir los efectos negativos de la homofobia y favorecer la identificación positiva y la autoaceptación de la orientación homosexual. En conclusión, la homofobia familiar y el rechazo familiar al homosexual ante la revelación de la orientación homosexual son aspectos asociados a la conducta suicida en varones homosexuales.

Palabras clave: comportamiento suicida, homosexualidad, homofobia, masculinidad hegemónica

El estudio de la salud mental en la población lésbico, gay y bisexual (LGB) ha sido tema de interés en las últimas décadas. Los grupos LGB presentan mayores alteraciones en su salud física y mental, particularmente la ideación y el intento de suicidio (Granados-Cosme & Delgado-Sánchez, 2008; Vega, Blasco, Vaca & Díaz 2002). Algunas de estas son crónicas (Sandfort, Bakker, Schellevis & Vanwesenbeeck, 2006).

Granados-Cosme & Delgado-Sánchez (2008) reportan que los varones homosexuales; a) perciben su orientación sexual como una alteración a un orden externo fuera del esquema heterosexista, provocando sentimientos de confusión, negación, temor, culpa, auto-desprecio y tristeza, b) observaron conductas de rechazo a la homosexualidad en sus entornos primarios y secundarios, lo cual incrementó sentimientos de temor, ocultamiento de su orientación sexual y aislamiento, y c) identifican que la tristeza se debe a su devaluación personal por el rechazo a su orientación sexual y a la sensación de que su homosexualidad generaría sufrimiento y culpa a sus familiares. Se distinguieron tres síntomas constantes de sufrimiento psíquico: tristeza, miedo e ideación suicida. Este sufrimiento psíquico caracteriza la vida de los homosexuales en la infancia y, que en la adolescencia se acentúa y configura un estado de vulnerabilidad a presentar trastornos depresivos, de ansiedad y conducta suicida. En otro estudio con hombres gay y bisexuales latinos residentes en USA, Díaz, Ayala, Bein, Henne & Marin (2001) reportan la asociación de síntomas de distres psicológico que compromete la salud mental y bienestar con una historia de experiencias de discriminación social debido a su orientación sexual y pertenencia étnica.

En México, la Secretaría de Salud en el 2007, expuso que el 30% de los homosexuales sufrió burla y humillación en la infancia o en la adolescencia y el 8% sufrió violencia en algún momento de su vida.

Acerca del significado de la homosexualidad en jóvenes, Lozano (2009), identificó una agresión y percepción mucho más negativa hacia los homosexuales varones que hacia las lesbianas y se observó que la mujer heterosexual percibe la homosexualidad con mayor aceptación en comparación al hombre heterosexual, en tanto que los varones heterosexuales perciben de manera más positiva al lesbianismo que a la homosexualidad masculina.

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La violencia y la discriminación son factores de riesgo para los trastornos mentales, el alcoholismo, la ideación e intento suicida en la población LGB y se eleva más el porcentaje en las personas que intentan ocultar su orientación. Las formas y los efectos de la violencia afectan de forma diferente a cada sexo; los varones presentan mayores experiencia de victimización y homofobia internalizada; las mujeres bisexuales/lesbianas son hasta 7 veces más propensas a presentar alcoholismo y las adolescentes presentan mayor experiencia de victimización que sus pares heterosexuales (Lamas, 1996; Mays & Cochran, 2001; Meyer, 2007; Ortiz & García, 2005; Paul, Catania, Pollack, Moskowitz, Canchola, Mills & Binson, 2002; Pinhey & Millman, 2004; Russell & Joyner, 2001; Sandfort et al., 2006).

La homofobia forma parte de un proceso causal en las problemáticas de salud de los homosexuales (Granados-Cosme & Delgado-Sánchez, 2008) y es un fenómeno complejo y universal por sus diferentes formas de expresión, que van desde la exclusión social hasta la agresión verbal y física, manifestándose en todos los estratos socioeconómicos.

La definición básica de homofobia es el odio a la homosexualidad; es una actitud o una ideología de rechazo y temor hacia todo lo relacionado con ésta, que estigmatiza y discrimina a personas cuya opción o identidad sexual no es la heterosexual, la cual es la norma institucionalizada. La homofobia también la experimentan personas cuyo comportamiento no se ajusta a lo que se considera adecuado de su género/genitalidad, es decir, hombres afeminados o mujeres masculinas (Borrillo, 2001). Para Castañeda (2009) la homofobia es el miedo o rechazo a la relación sexual entre personas del mismo sexo, el temor o aversión a la confusión de géneros, para la autora, el problema radica en que un hombre pueda adquirir atributos de la mujer. Por otro lado, Ramos (2005) afirma que la homofobia es el miedo a que otros hombres revelen al entorno social que no alcanzan los estándares para poder ser considerados verdaderos hombres. La homofobia es un constructo sociocultural que incluye respuestas emocionales como el miedo, ansiedad, enojo, incomodidad y aversión que algún individuo experimenta al estar o interactuar con personas homosexuales (Cruz, 2002).

Culturalmente se cree que lo masculino y femenino son antagonicos con preeminencia jerárquica de lo masculino, soportado por los roles y estereotipos de género y rol sexual (Cruz, 2002; Connell, 2003). Esta

construcción social vincula los rasgos biológicos del sexo con lo masculino o lo femenino (Ortiz & Granados, 2003). El género se aprende y se interioriza a través de la socialización de las experiencias tempranas de la infancia, en una apropiación de normas y papeles favorecedores de modelos patriarcales de masculinidad que generan desigualdades (Ramírez & Uribe, 2008) la constitución del género requiere una identificación con la heterosexualidad obligatoria que prescribe que los sexos/géneros son polares, discretos y heterosexuales (Fuller, 1997).

Para Connell (2003) existe un modelo dominante de masculinidad, configurado por prácticas genéricas que legitiman el patriarcado y que se define como masculinidad hegemónica, validando el ejercicio de la violencia, discriminación y rechazo con lo relacionado a lo femenino y devalúa aquello que no cumple con las exigencias que impone lo masculino. Dicha violencia es ejercida tanto contra las mujeres como contra la comunidad homosexual o aquello percibido como femenino o no masculino (Lozano & Rocha, 2011).

En la sociedad mexicana, el concepto de familia se sustenta primordialmente en los conceptos de masculinidad y heterosexualidad. Cuando un miembro de la familia asume o manifiesta una orientación sexual diferente, no recibe automáticamente el apoyo y aceptación de la familia ni del entorno. Como consecuencia, los homosexuales incorporan dentro de su auto-concepto significados negativos, prejuicios y estereotipos que son asociados a la homosexualidad, lo que genera actitudes y reacciones negativas y/o de rechazo hacia su propia homosexualidad y la de otros, a esto se le denomina Homofobia Internalizada (Ortiz, 2005).

Respecto de las conductas suicidas, se ha señalado que el factor de riesgo para presentar conducta suicida no está directamente relacionado con la orientación sexual sino con la discriminación percibida del entorno social en el que se desenvuelve el individuo LGB, en ese sentido el soporte social disminuye los síntomas depresivos, los problemas de conducta y funge como factor protector de la conducta suicida (Hatzenbuehler, 2011; Rosario, Schrimshaw & Hunter, 2005). El apoyo de los pares tiene un efecto protector, al mismo tiempo el soporte familiar y de pares tienen un significativo efecto compensatorio en contra de la victimización mas no eliminan el efecto negativo (Mustaki, Newcomb & Garofalo, 2011).

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En resumen, la comunidad LGB es más propensa a presentar comportamiento suicida en comparación con sus pares heterosexuales, es los varones homosexuales presentaron mayores tasas de intento de suicidio en comparación con heterosexuales. De acuerdo con la literatura revisada, existe un vínculo entre la conducta suicida y la orientación sexual, sin embargo, poco se aborda sobre el proceso de esta relación.

De ahí que el objetivo de este trabajo sea, describir y comprender el proceso vivencial de la homofobia, sus efectos en el proceso de aceptación/negación de la orientación sexual, asociada con el comportamiento suicida en varones homosexuales; y con ello identificar algunos de los factores de riesgo y protectores de la conducta suicida.

Método

Es un trabajo de tipo cualitativo, descriptivo/interpretativo. Se realizó en la Zona Metropolitana Guadalajara, Jalisco, México; en el periodo comprendido de noviembre de 2012 a mayo de 2014; dentro del programa de la “Clínica de Duelo para Suicidio” del Departamento de Psicología Aplicada del Centro Universitario de Ciencias de la Salud de la Universidad de Guadalajara. La muestra se conformó por 7 personas residentes en Guadalajara seleccionadas mediante la técnica Bola de Nieve. Todos los participantes fueron varones que se definieron a sí mismos como homosexuales/gays, con un rango de edad de los 20 a los 40 años, con una media de 28.16 años, 6 de los participantes con estudios de licenciatura y uno con educación técnica, todos manifestaron ser católicos. Los participantes se dividieron en dos grupos, para el primer grupo los criterios de inclusión fueron: varones que se definieron a sí mismos como homosexuales o gays, y que presentaron al menos un intento de suicidio a lo largo de su vida. En el segundo grupo se emplearon los mismos criterios de inclusión con la variante de no presentar antecedentes de intento de suicidio. El criterio de no inclusión fue aquellos participantes que se definieron como bisexuales o no homosexuales. El criterio de exclusión fue aquellos participantes que no completaron el proceso de la investigación.

Procedimiento: Se realizó una entrevista a profundidad con 4 temas centrales: orientación sexual, redes sociales, homofobia y riesgo suicida.

En el tema de *orientación sexual* se indagó sobre el proceso vivencial del individuo en la aceptación y declaración de su homosexualidad. Se buscó obtener información acerca de: atracción y preferencias sexuales, percepción de la homosexualidad (propia y de otros), auto-identificación y declaración de su homosexualidad a otros. En *redes sociales* se pretendió identificar redes de apoyo de familiares, pares, amigos o instituciones que jugaron un papel importante o determinante en la adaptación positiva o negativa del individuo al entorno social. En *homofobia* se buscó obtener información de experiencias homofóbicas y de su internalización; se indagó sobre eventos negativos que la persona haya experimentado o presenciado en su persona y hacia los demás por su orientación homosexual. La *conducta suicida* se exploró mediante preguntas abiertas buscando intentos de suicidio previos, pensamientos suicidas y qué factores provocaron estas conductas. Una vez identificado el candidato se le contactó vía telefónica para un primer acercamiento y acordar una cita para la realización de las entrevistas. Estas se realizaron por dos entrevistadores simultáneamente con el entrevistado (psicólogos clínicos, varón gay y mujer heterosexual) en la Clínica de Duelo. En promedio, se realizaron 2 sesiones con cada uno de los participantes. Una vez analizada la primera entrevista se procedió a identificar las dudas o los temas a profundizar para la realización de una segunda entrevista con el fin de esclarecer y corroborar la información aportada por cada uno de los entrevistados. Se realizó un total de siete entrevistas con una duración de 11 horas y 24 minutos.

Todas las entrevistas fueron audio-grabadas con una grabadora digital ICD-P210 (Sony Electronics Inc.), posteriormente transcritas textualmente, para el análisis de la información se utilizó el software para análisis cualitativo de datos Atlas.ti v5.2. Los datos obtenidos de las entrevistas fueron discutidos por ambos entrevistadores durante el primer proceso de codificación. Cabe señalar que en este primer proceso de codificación la diferencia de orientación sexual de los entrevistadores permitió analizar la información desde puntos de vista distintos: homosexual y heterosexual; lo que favoreció a una perspectiva más amplia evitando en lo posible los prejuicios personales.

Se realizó un segundo análisis e interpretación de la información de manera colegiada por un grupo de profesionales de la salud con distinta formación (Salud Pública, Ciencias del Comportamiento y Psicología). La

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información analizada se categorizó de acuerdo a los tópicos identificados y se codificó de manera abierta y axial, con un total de 68 códigos.

Se pidió el Consentimiento Informado por escrito a cada participante antes de iniciar la entrevista. En el mismo documento se les explicó a los participantes las razones del trabajo, se garantizó la equidad, confidencialidad, anonimato de los datos proporcionados, así como la libertad para retirarse del estudio o retirar su información.

Este trabajo presentó un riesgo mínimo para los participantes. En caso de presentar alguna situación de ansiedad debido a la exposición a situaciones vivenciales relacionadas con su orientación sexual o conducta suicida se derivó para su atención psicoterapéutica a instancias adecuadas.

Se respetaron los principios fundamentales de la bioética: autonomía, beneficencia, no maleficencia y justicia.

En esta investigación se respetaron los requerimientos conforme al Reglamento de la Ley General de Salud de México, en Materia de Investigación.

Resultados

Los participantes fueron cuatro sin intento de suicidio (P1, P2, P3, P4) y tres con intento de suicidio (P5, P6, P7).

Del Proceso Vivencial de la Homofobia

Todos los entrevistados afirmaron que en su infancia y adolescencia, escucharon por algún integrante de su familia comentarios hostiles y despectivos hacia personas homosexuales o que representaran dicha orientación sexual:

...mi papá viene de una familia muy machista este donde sus hermanos si son de así de “¡ah! por qué traes esas greñas y por qué... el aretito, y por qué el piercing y por qué y eso es de jotos y jotos aquí ¡no! [P2: E1].

También manifestaron haber sido receptores de comentarios ofensivos, a lo largo de sus vidas por parte de algún integrante de su entorno primario (familia y/o unidad doméstica) “...mi mamá me dijo: yo puedo concebir

que haya en la familia drogadictos, rateros, pero un joto ¡nunca!...” [P1: E1]; esto debido a su imagen o comportamiento poco masculino, es decir, afeminado o carente de rudeza y hombría: “(mi mamá) Me empezó a decir que si yo qué parecía niña que nada más me faltaba la falda” [P1: E1]; “...llego mi papá y le dio un golpe en la mesa y ya me dijo: y tú nada más con tu vocecita de joto...” [P4: E1].

Todos expresaron haber vivido acoso escolar y verbal: “...me gritaban desde que iba entrando a la secundaria, a mí y a otro compañero, [...]: ahí van los jotos, ahí van los jotitos, ahí van los maricones” [P5: E1]; y también acoso físico: “[...] nos aventaban cosas [...] bolas de papel este botes de basura y esas cosas...” [P5: E1]. Todo esto debido a que sus pares los calificaban como poco masculinos u homosexuales: “...era puro niño que te decía que porque no jugabas fútbol eras un maricón [P1: E1]...”; en mi primaria y en mi secundaria si era mucho el bullying de ¡¡¡ay si eres un joto!!! [...] y te pegaban...” [P1: E2].

De los Efectos de la Homophobia

En todos los entrevistados, la identificación negativa de su orientación homosexual se expresó mediante: a) comentarios auto despreciativos, “...En la adolescencia decir bueno soy chaparro este soy gay [...] soy lo peor que puede haber en este mundo...” [P6: E1]; y b) sentimientos de anormalidad, “...Por el hecho de ser gay me sentía muy anormal...” [P7: E1].

Los participantes mencionaron haber experimentado: a) confusión, “Ya en secundaria fui agarrando eso de no soy tan normal [...] dije a lo mejor estoy confundido” [P1: E1]; b) ocultamiento, “Pues era un problema para mí en ese momento el no poder hablar con mi familia [...] recuerdo que no me sentía sincero [...] sentía que les estaba mintiendo [...] a no decirles mi orientación sexual” [P3: E1]; c) negación de su orientación sexual, “Desde mi historia como homosexual era la parte que rechacé, que negué, que vulneré, que la dejé siempre en la periferia”. [P 6: E 2]; d) depresión, “Pues me acuerdo que yo estaba muy deprimido [...] demasiado ruido, era demasiada agresión, era demasiada burla, [...] yo no sabía que en ese momento era depresión”. [P 5: E 1]; e) aislamiento social, “... no te dan ganas de estar ni con tu familia ni en la iglesia, nada más como que te

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apartan más” [P 1: E 1]; f) sentimientos de anormalidad, “Por el hecho de ser gay me sentía muy anormal.” [P 7: E 1]; y g) falta de pertenencia, “Yo nunca me sentí perteneciente y por el contrario siempre me sentí como señalado.”; “... te sientes excluido como... como el bicho raro siempre”. [P 6: E 2].

Otro elemento presente en todos los participantes fue el rechazo familiar debido a la homosexualidad del entrevistado: “Mi mamá [...] me dijo: nomás quiero saber que andas, qué es tu novio qué andas de joto para que veas” [P7:E1].

De la Homofobia y la Conducta Suicida

Sólo se incluyen comentarios del grupo con intento de suicidio.

En la relación entre homofobia y conducta suicida se identificó que los participantes con antecedentes de intento de suicidio crecieron en un entorno homóforo, caracterizado por un ambiente de rechazo a la homosexualidad por parte de familiares, pares y compañeros de la escuela. Estas manifestaciones de hostilidad, que se vivenciaron desde la infancia, las interiorizaron los participantes, lo que facilitó una identificación negativa con todo lo relacionado con la homosexualidad; a su vez estas reacciones negativas generaron un rechazo no sólo a su homosexualidad sino a la de otros (homofobia internalizada).

La identificación negativa y la homofobia internalizada generaron en estos participantes: confusión, ocultamiento y negación de su homosexualidad en algún momento de su vida y previo al intento de suicidio.

Todo lo anterior conjugado con la revelación de la orientación homosexual acompañada de indiferencia y/o rechazo; el aislamiento social; la ausencia de redes de apoyo y falta de pertenencia propiciaron la conducta suicida en los participantes: “...me intente este quitar la vida porque soy gay...”; “... Soy gay y por eso lo hice porque a mí no me gusta y si ustedes no me quieren así pues yo no quiero estar aquí”. [P7: E1]; “... yo no quiero vivir porque soy homosexual”. [P6: E2]; “...las dos primeras veces es de me voy a morir porque no soy normal, porque la gente no me quiere y porque soy joto”. [P5: E1].

Los Factores de Riesgo de la Conducta Suicida

Este apartado incluye únicamente comentarios de aquellos participantes que presentaron conducta suicida.

Aunque todos los participantes coincidieron en la vivencia de acoso escolar; rechazo familiar; homofobia (en todas sus manifestaciones) e identificación negativa, en aquellos que presentaron por lo menos un intento de suicidio se conjugo: a) el aislamiento, “Yo decía bueno estoy bien solo o sea yo no le puedo contar a nadie...”; [P6: E1]; b) falta de pertenencia, “...para mí fue muy traumático porque yo nunca me sentí perteneciente y por el contrario siempre me sentí como señalado.” [P6: E1]; siempre he sentido que nunca encajo” [P6: E2]; y c) ausencia de redes de apoyo, “Yo siempre toda mi vida reprimí eso, no se lo dije a nadie, no se lo comentaba a nadie, no me gustaba...” [P7: E1].

De los Factores Protectores de la Conducta Suicida

En el presente apartado se incluyen solamente comentarios del grupo que no presentó conducta suicida.

En los participantes que no presentaron intento de suicidio se identificó como factor protector la revelación de la orientación sexual a otros acompañada con el apoyo o validación de los pares en la adolescencia y adultez temprana.

Se identificaron diferentes tipos de apoyo que fungen como protectores:

a) Psicoterapéutico y/u orientativo que incluye profesionales de la salud y consejeros; y b) fuentes y medios de información.

El apoyo que otorgan los miembros de la familia no sólo cumplió como factor protector sino que fue esencial en el proceso de aceptación de la orientación homosexual de los entrevistados.

La identificación positiva no sólo es uno de los primeros pasos en el proceso de aceptación de la orientación homosexual, también se asoció con los factores protectores de los entrevistados que no presentaron intento de suicidio.

Proceso de Aceptación/Negación de la Orientación Homosexual en Varones

En la *figura 1* se describe el proceso de aceptación/negación de su orientación homosexual. Este proceso inició en un contexto compuesto por la heteronormatividad, la masculinidad hegemónica y la homofobia naturalizada, es decir, un entorno homófobo donde lo masculino y la heterosexualidad son considerados sinónimos de normalidad y aceptación social; a su vez discrimina y rechaza todo aquello relacionado con la homosexualidad o lo no masculino. Este contexto influyó en la dinámica socio-familiar y determinó la percepción con respecto a la homosexualidad y su actitud frente a ella. La homofobia también se manifestó en otros entornos como son el escolar y otros espacios de socialización. Dicho contexto homófobo se mantiene, en mayor o menor grado, durante toda la vida del homosexual.

En una segunda fase que se denominó descubrimiento de la atracción homosexual, la homofobia antes mencionada se interiorizó e identificó negativamente lo que generó confusión de su orientación sexual. Posterior a esto los participantes iniciaron la construcción de su orientación sexual, donde para aclarar sus dudas respecto a su orientación, la mayoría de ellos optaron por experimentar la heterosexualidad lo que permitió aclarar su atracción homosexual dando como resultado dos posibles alternativas: negar y/u ocultar la orientación homosexual u optar por el “experimento amigo”, es decir, revelar a un amigo cercano o de confianza su atracción homosexual con el fin de evaluar las posibles respuestas de éstos.

El experimento amigo fue el inicio de la fase denominada exposición social de la orientación homosexual, donde se encontraron dos posibles respuestas. La primera es de tolerancia/aceptación ante la homosexualidad, lo que validó la orientación homosexual. Permitted iniciar la identificación positiva, la cual se vio favorecida por los apoyos que proporcionaron los amigos y pares y en otros casos el psicoterapéutico y/u orientativo; lo que favoreció y reafirmó su homosexualidad y brindó seguridad para revelar la orientación homosexual a los miembros de la familia. En la segunda se identificó una respuesta de indiferencia y/o rechazo ante su homosexualidad, lo que invalidó la orientación sexual de los participantes y reafirmó la identificación negativa y por ende mayor negación y/u

ocultamiento de la homosexualidad. Todo esto originó una ausencia de apoyo de pares, carencia de redes de apoyo social y falta de pertenencia que dio como resultado un aislamiento socio-familiar. Este aislamiento se reforzó por el rechazo de la familia y aunado con lo anterior dejó al individuo en una situación de riesgo ante la conducta suicida.

En la última fase, de este proceso, que se denominó de aceptación/rechazo se identificó que son tres los elementos que concluyeron dicho proceso: la autoaceptación, la personalización y el “salir del clóset” o expresión social de la orientación sexual, estos tres elementos pueden ser simultáneos o presentarse en distinto orden pero todos jugaron un papel fundamental y finalizaron el proceso de aceptación de la orientación homosexual. Por otro lado, en esta misma fase se puede presentar la no autoaceptación y la despersonalización y que conjugada con los factores de riesgo previamente descritos en esta investigación dio como resultado la conducta suicida.



Figura 1. El diagrama del proceso de aceptación/negación de la orientación homosexual en varones. OH: Orientación Homosexual.

Discusión

El objetivo del estudio fue describir el proceso vivencial de aceptación/negación de la orientación sexual y de la homofobia en varones homosexuales; la relación existente entre la homofobia y la conducta suicida e identificar factores protectores y de riesgo para dicha conducta.

Respecto del proceso vivencial de la homofobia, todos los participantes refirieron haber crecido en un entorno caracterizado por discriminación, rechazo y violencia hacia la homosexualidad por sus pares y familiares. Este entorno homófobo puede ser explicado mediante la masculinidad hegemónica, en el que todo aquello relacionado con lo masculino tiene una posición dominante y subordina todo aquello que no lo es (Connell, 2003; Lozano & Rocha, 2011). Esta masculinidad sostiene su poder sobre cuatro pilares que son: el sexismo, la misoginia, la heterosexualidad compulsiva y la homofobia (Tellería, 2008). La familia aprende y repite estos pilares señalando y rechazando en los varones todo aquello que no es masculino. La homofobia en la familia se manifiesta mediante hostilidad, violencia, delimita aquello que será aceptado y rechazado. Como consecuencia, la homosexualidad en los varones es cargada de significados negativos ya que se le equipara con pasividad, feminidad y decadencia (Ortiz & Granados, 2003).

La homofobia familiar y el acoso escolar homófobo influyen negativamente en la construcción de la personalidad del hombre homosexual, provocan sentimientos de anormalidad que conducen al individuo a identificar negativamente la homosexualidad. La identificación negativa es un proceso individual que se reafirma a través de la homofobia en la familia y en la escuela. Granados-Cosme & Delgado-Sánchez (2008) señalan que las experiencias de la homofobia afectan en los recursos psíquicos, como se observa en el discurso de los participantes, quienes aluden al autorrechazo, aislamiento, sentimientos de culpa, confusión, frustración y auto valoración negativa. Al identificar negativamente la homosexualidad, el individuo busca evitar y ocultar sus deseos homosexuales, genera autodesprecio y rechazo de sí mismo (Granados-Cosme & Delgado-Sánchez, 2008) y de otros (Ortiz, 2005), lo que favorece a la internalización de la homofobia.

La homofobia internalizada conjuga elementos sociales y personales, permite la descarga en otros homosexuales de los estereotipos y prejuicios negativos atribuidos a la homosexualidad. Marina Castañeda (2009) afirma que una de las funciones de la homofobia es trivializar a la homosexualidad, la viste de estereotipos y le quita lo extraño, lo que se observó en la homofobia internalizada.

En el proceso de aceptación de la homosexualidad se observó un periodo de confusión de la orientación sexual, la mayoría de los participantes afirmó haber experimentado la heterosexualidad para aclarar o disipar sus dudas respecto a su orientación homosexual.

Al periodo de confusión de la homosexualidad le siguió un periodo de aclaración de la orientación sexual con dos opciones: en una se opta por revelar la homosexualidad a un amigo cercano (“experimento amigo” en sus propias palabras) para evaluar la tolerancia y/o aceptación de su elección homosexual por parte de otros. Otra opción es negar y/u ocultar la orientación homosexual.

La tolerancia y/o la aceptación por amigos validan la orientación homosexual, permitiendo al individuo iniciar un proceso de identificación positiva, que reconstruye su identidad. La validación de los amigos reduce la carga negativa de la homofobia (Mustaki et al., 2011).

Si en el “experimento amigo” se obtiene indiferencia y/o rechazo se invalida la orientación homosexual, provoca la negación o el ocultamiento de su homosexualidad e incrementa la identificación negativa. Propicia la carencia de redes de apoyo, la falta de sentido de pertenencia y el aislamiento socio-familiar. Al no aceptarse como homosexual, el individuo inicia un proceso de despersonalización, asume estereotipos negativos de la homosexualidad y anula cualquier valor o característica de su propia identidad.

Si al revelar la orientación homosexual a la familia se obtiene apoyo y/o tolerancia se favorece e incrementa la identificación positiva. Aquellos jóvenes que cuenten con una familia que los comprende en el proceso de asumirse como homosexuales no ven lesionada su autoestima (Cornejo, 2010). Sin embargo, el apoyo de la familia no elimina los efectos negativos de la victimización por homofobia experimentada en la infancia y la adolescencia (Mustaki et al., 2011).

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Durante la fase de exposición social, el apoyo de pares y psicoterapéutico u orientativo (libre de prejuicios homófobos) ayudan a reafirmar la identificación positiva, superar la autoevaluación negativa (Meyer, 2007). Con el apoyo familiar inicia el proceso de autoaceptación de la orientación homosexual.

En esta investigación se identificaron tres etapas que se pueden presentar en diferente orden: la autoaceptación, la manifestación social de la orientación homosexual o “salir del clóset” y la personalización/despersonalización.

La autoaceptación es la integración de la orientación homosexual a las características del individuo. Ésta inicia con la identificación positiva, reconociendo su homosexualidad como algo propio y superando los prejuicios negativos asociados con la homosexualidad. Además, el homosexual comienza a tener manifestaciones sociales de su orientación sexual. Paul et al. (2002) relacionaron esto con efectos positivos en la autoestima.

Es importante distinguir dos maneras diferentes en que el homosexual se categoriza en términos sociales. La despersonalización es cuando el individuo se define en función a semejanzas con otros homosexuales y tiene un comportamiento basado en estereotipos. Este proceso proporciona pertenencia al grupo con el que comparte características comunes (De la Mora & Terradillos, 2007). Sin embargo, pertenecer al grupo estereotípico mantiene y fomenta la homofobia, ya que se repiten los comportamientos que son no tolerados socialmente.

En contraparte, la personalización es el proceso mediante el cual un individuo se define como persona única en términos de sus diferencias con otras y tiene un comportamiento basado en sus propias características. En este proceso, el homosexual se define principalmente como una persona única e integra su orientación sexual a su identidad; evita la repetición de comportamientos estereotípicos, permite construir nuevos grupos de referencia y de pertenencia (De la Mora & Terradillos, 2007).

Diversos autores han coincidido en que la ansiedad, depresión, aislamiento, alcoholismo y abuso sustancias son algunas de las alteraciones de la salud mental que presenta la comunidad LGB (Russell & Joyner, 2001; Ortiz, 2005; Sandfort et al., 2006; Cochran, Mays, Alegria, Ortega & Takeuchi, 2007; Meyer, 2007; Granados-Cosme & Delgado-Sánchez,

2008). En el presente estudio se observó la identificación negativa y la homofobia internalizada; el ocultamiento y la negación de la orientación homosexual; sentimientos de anormalidad; falta de pertenencia y redes de apoyo. Esto puede ser explicado debido a la vulnerabilidad a la que es sometida esta comunidad (Mays & Cochran, 2001; King et al., 2008; Paul et al., 2002, Meyer 2007). Granados-Cosme y Delgado-Sánchez (2008) relacionó las experiencias de homofobia y su impacto en la salud psíquica de sus entrevistados e identificó sentimientos de culpa, confusión, frustración, autovaloración negativa, autorrechazo y aislamiento.

Otros estudios concluyen que los jóvenes homosexuales son más propensos a cometer suicidio (Russel & Joyner, 2001; Hatzenbuehler, 2011), especialmente los varones homosexuales (Remafedi, French, Story, Resnick, & Blum 1998; Vega et al., 2002; Pinhey & Millman, 2004; Silenzio, Pena, Duberstein, Cerel, & Knox, 2007; Mathy, Cochran, Olsen, & Mays, 2009). Scourfield, Roen & McDermonnt (2008) afirman que esta población percibe al suicidio como respuesta a diferentes situaciones de angustia, aislamiento, homofobia y al impacto de declararse. En el presente estudio estas cuatro situaciones de angustia estuvieron presentes en los participantes con antecedentes de intento de suicidio. La homofobia ejercida por la familia tuvo mayor impacto negativo en los participantes y como consecuencia la homofobia internalizada.

La homofobia crea condiciones para que el individuo se identifique negativamente con la homosexualidad aunado a esto, la revelación de la orientación sexual con respuesta de indiferencia/rechazo por parte de los pares y familiares, la ausencia de redes de apoyo (Hatzenbuehler, 2011; Rosario, Schrimshaw, & Hunter, 2005) en especial de la familia nuclear (Ryan, Huebner, Díaz & Sánchez, 2009), la falta de pertenencia y el aislamiento socio-familiar propiciaron conductas lesivas y/o suicidas.

Vega et al., (2002) postula que los factores de riesgo para cometer suicidio son: dificultades para construir la identidad sexual, el entorno hostil, aislamiento, alcoholismo y antecedentes de violencia familiar; por su parte Hatzenbuehler (2011) identificó 4 factores de riesgo para cometer un intento de suicidio en comparación a la población heterosexual, estos son: depresión, victimización de los pares, alcoholismo y abuso físico en la infancia, concluyendo que las características negativas del ambiente social incrementan el riesgo de intento de suicidio entre la juventud LGB

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(Hatzenbuehler, 2011). Cota & Borges (2009) relacionaron el ocultamiento de la orientación sexual con la conducta suicida. D'Augelli, Hershberger & Pilkington (2001) concluyen que el riesgo de cometer suicidio se aumenta conforme se va identificando hacia ser gay o bisexual pero sin compartirlo con alguien.

En el presente estudio se consideró que la depresión, el entorno hostil, la victimización por parte de pares y de la familia, antecedentes de violencia familiar, la dificultad para construir una identidad sexual y el ocultamiento de la orientación sexual son elementos que están presentes en la vida del homosexual y que lo vulneran, sin embargo, no fueron identificados como factores de riesgo, ya que se encontraron presentes en los participantes sin antecedentes de conducta suicida.

Los factores de riesgo identificados en este trabajo para la conducta suicida en varones homosexuales son: la revelación de su homosexualidad con respuesta de indiferencia y/o rechazo; la falta de pertenencia a un grupo social; la ausencia de redes de apoyo y el aislamiento socio-familiar.

La revelación de la orientación homosexual es un factor de riesgo porque se invalida la decisión, lo que provoca la reafirmación de la identificación negativa y de la homofobia internalizada; esto situó al individuo nuevamente en un estado de vulnerabilidad, confusión y de evitación a socializar.

El aislamiento social puede ser resultado de la evitación a la confrontación y a cuestionamientos de los integrantes de sus redes de apoyo. Estos cuestionamientos aluden a la orientación homosexual y están fundamentados bajo los estándares de las creencias de la masculinidad hegemónica que determina lo que se debe aceptar y/o rechazar en un hombre; la naturalización de la homofobia se expresa mediante comentarios que aluden a la homosexualidad de manera agresiva o sarcástica, pero el homosexual los interpreta como rechazo hacia su persona, por lo que evita la interacción social con los demás.

La falta de pertenencia se debe a que el individuo homosexual no pertenece a la sociedad heterosexista que lo rechaza y discrimina; ni pertenece a la familia por transgredir los estereotipos de género, tradiciones y mantener los pilares de la masculinidad hegemónica; y tampoco pertenece a la comunidad homosexual ya que él mismo no se acepta como tal. Las

manifestaciones de intolerancia a la homosexualidad por parte de la familia incrementan la no aceptación de la orientación homosexual.

Los factores protectores identificados en el presente estudio son: la revelación de la orientación homosexual con respuesta de tolerancia y/o aceptación del otro; el apoyo familiar y de pares; identificación positiva; la autoaceptación y la personalización.

La revelación de la homosexualidad acompañada de respuestas de tolerancia y/o aceptación por parte de familiares o amigos validan su orientación homosexual, lo propicia el inicio del proceso de aceptación, cuyo primer elemento es la identificación positiva ya mencionada previamente. La identificación positiva se ve favorecida por los apoyos de familiares y pares o en algunos casos por el apoyo psicoterapéutico y/u orientativo.

El apoyo de pares se identificó como un factor de protección (Mustaki et al., 2011) debido que genera sentimientos de alivio, desahogo y brinda sentimientos de pertenencia a un grupo que no rechaza a la homosexualidad. De la Mora & Terradillos (2007) afirman que la importancia de desarrollar un sentimiento de pertenencia es compartir rasgos comunes de la orientación sexual y de las experiencias vitales; además, supone salir del aislamiento social.

La respuesta de apoyo de la familia es fundamental para la salud mental y soporte emocional (Cornejo, 2010). En un estudio con adolescentes LGB, el soporte familiar y la autoaceptación, ante la revelación de la orientación homosexual, aminoraban el efecto negativo en la salud mental del abuso ‘antigay’ y a salir del clóset (Meyer, 2007). En población LGB se identificó que el conocimiento de los padres de la orientación homosexual y una buena relación familiar son factores de protección de la conducta suicida (Cota & Borges, 2009).

La identificación positiva es otro factor protector, ya que reafirma su elección y contribuye a la autoaceptación y a la personalización que también se identificaron como factores protectores debido a que estos dos elementos generan una visión integrada de su orientación homosexual, identidad, personalidad y características individuales.

Conclusiones

Diversas investigaciones señalan que el entorno hostil hacia los homosexuales es el causante de los daños a la salud mental en esta población. En este estudio se concluye que la homofobia en la familia repercute de forma importante en los recursos psíquicos del homosexual. Esta homofobia se sustenta en “ideales” basados sobre la masculinidad hegemónica, la heteronormatividad y por la propia naturalización de la homofobia. La homofobia familiar junto con el acoso escolar homófobo son los elementos primarios y fundamentales para el desarrollo de la homofobia internalizada.

Los actos hostiles hacia los homosexuales se presencian desde la infancia y antes que se defina la orientación homosexual. La internalización de estas agresiones propicia la internalización de la homofobia y la identificación negativa hacia su propia homosexualidad. Esto dificulta la aceptación de su orientación sexual y refuerza la negación de ésta, favoreciendo el aislamiento social.

La homofobia no fue un factor de riesgo determinante para presentar la conducta suicida, sin embargo, es un factor necesario y presente para ésta. La homofobia vulnera a los homosexuales e impide su desarrollo positivo en la sociedad; es la base de la identificación negativa y de la homofobia internalizada.

Los factores de riesgo identificados para la conducta suicida son: la revelación de su homosexualidad a otros con una respuesta de indiferencia y/o rechazo, el aislamiento socio-familiar, la falta de pertenencia y la ausencia de redes de apoyo.

Los factores protectores a la conducta suicida fueron: la revelación de la homosexualidad a otros acompañada de apoyo y/o validación de familiares y pares; el apoyo psicoterapéutico y/u orientativo; la identificación positiva y la autoaceptación y la personalización. Los apoyos de familiares y pares son los factores de protección más importantes, ayudan a disminuir los efectos de la victimización por homofobia y favorecen la identificación positiva y la autoaceptación.

Una de las limitaciones de la presente investigación radica principalmente en contar con una muestra pequeña. Un motivo del tamaño de la muestra fue debido al estigma social doblemente vergonzoso

asociado al suicidio y a la homosexualidad; lo que probablemente influyó en la decisión de no participar en el estudio. Se recomienda realizar un estudio con una muestra mayor para confirmar los hallazgos.

Otra limitante fue la dificultad de profundizar en temas que otras investigaciones tradicionalmente han vinculado a la conducta suicida y la orientación homosexual como lo son: depresión, uso y abuso de alcohol y drogas y abuso sexual.

Aunque se indagó sobre la homofobia y el acoso escolar homóforo (presente en todos los participantes) la intensidad y frecuencia de estos en los diferentes entornos (familiar, escolar, comunidad) no fueron precisados en esta investigación.

Respecto a los alcances, al ser una investigación de tipo cualitativo, esta investigación brinda información acerca del proceso de aceptación y negación de la orientación homosexual; sobre los factores que repercuten en los recursos psíquicos de los homosexuales así como su comportamiento ante la conducta suicida. Esta información puede ser empleada por especialistas de la salud mental para la comprensión y abordaje de dichos temas.

Los hallazgos resultan útiles para sensibilizar sobre los efectos de la homofobia, con el fin de proteger la salud mental de la población homosexual. También brindan una oportunidad para trabajar con la familia y el homosexual con el propósito de facilitar el proceso de aceptación de la orientación homosexual y enfatizar en la importancia de la familia en este proceso.

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Engaging Boys in Eradicating Gender-based Violence: A Pilot Study of a Promundo-adapted Program

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Abstract

The Brazil-based Promundo organization originated in 1997 and developed Program H to engage young men in the pursuit of gender equality. Research on Promundo and similar gender-transformative programs demonstrate that this type of intervention can significantly increase beliefs in gender equality and improve sexual health outcomes—pregnancy, safe sex practices, sexual and intimate partner violence, and STI and HIV transmission. Because Promundo has yet to be implemented in the United States, the authors worked alongside a victim service agency in the southeast United States—that has ties to Promundo—to adapt Program H for implementation with fourth grade boys. The program was piloted with a group of ten boys who attend a predominantly low-income and African-American public school. These boys were also a part of a statewide program to assist children at risk of academic failure due to poor test scores. This paper presents results of a pilot study which utilized a pre-posttest design. Assessment measures were adapted from program evaluations of Men Can Stop Rape’s Men of Strength (MOST) Clubs and include self-reported attitudes and beliefs about gender and masculinity, emotional expression and violence. Additionally, researchers conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with program instructors. This paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of implementing such a program with this particular population. The paper also explains changes to the program that will take effect during the second program implementation in spring of 2015.

Keywords: Promundo, gender-based violence prevention, program evaluation, gender-transformative programming

Involucrar a los Chicos en la Erradicación de la Violencia de Género: Un Estudio Piloto del Programa Promundo

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Resumen

La organización Promundo con sede en Brasil se creó en 1997 y desarrolló el Programa H para involucrar a los hombres jóvenes en la lucha por la igualdad de género. La investigación sobre Promundo y otros programas similares de transformación de género demuestran que este tipo de intervención puede aumentar significativamente las creencias en la igualdad de género y mejorar los hábitos de salud sexual (embarazo, sexo seguro, violencia sexual y de pareja, y la transmisión del ITS y el VIH). Como el programa Promundo aún no se ha implementado en los Estados Unidos, se trabajó junto a una agencia de servicios para víctimas en el sudeste de los Estados Unidos - que tiene lazos con Promundo - con el objetivo de adaptar el Programa H con los chicos de de cuarto grado. El programa se puso a prueba con un grupo de diez niños con bajos ingresos predominantemente que asisten que acuden a una escuela pública con población afroamericana. Estos chicos también fueron parte de un programa estatal dirigido a chicos en riesgo de fracaso escolar debido con resultados negativos en las pruebas de competencias. El presente trabajo presenta los resultados de un estudio piloto que utilizó un diseño pre-post-test. Para ello se han tomado medidas de evaluación que han sido adaptadas de los formatos de Men Can Stop Rape's Men of Strength (MOST) e incluyen actitudes y creencias sobre el género y la masculinidad, las emociones y la violencia. Además, los investigadores llevaron a cabo entrevistas cualitativas semiestructuradas con los educadores. El artículo concluye con la discusión sobre las implicaciones de la implementación de un programa de este tipo con esta población en particular y explica los cambios en el programa que se llevarán a cabo durante la segunda aplicación del programa en la primavera de 2015.

Palabras clave: Promundo, prevención de la violencia de género, evaluación del programa, programa transformativo del género

International public health organizations are increasingly aware of the tie between traditional gender norms and beliefs, violence, and sexual and reproductive health issues. According to a recent review of studies investigating these ties, stronger adherence to traditional conceptualizations of both masculinity and femininity influences health-related behaviors in gendered ways as well (National Council on Gender, 2012). For instance, men with more traditional attitudes are less likely to use condoms while women with more traditional attitudes are less likely to carry them or insist upon their usage. These men with traditional attitudes engage in sexual activity at earlier ages and with a higher number of partners, but are less likely to be tested for sexually transmitted infections and HIV. In addition, they are more likely to engage in forced or coerced sex and intimate partner abuse. Their female counterparts are less knowledgeable about sexual health and more likely to experience unplanned and teenage pregnancies, coercive sex, and intimate partner abuse (National Council on Gender, 2012).

Accordingly, many governmental organizations involved in preventing these health issues—especially HIV/AIDS—are increasingly requiring those they partner with and/or fund to target traditional gender beliefs in their programming. Research now suggests such programs do improve sexual health and also reduce outcomes related to sexual violence, including traditional gender attitudes (Boender, Santana, Santillán, Hardee, Greene, & Schuler, 2004; Population Reference Bureau, 2011; Ricardo, Eads, & Barker, 2011).

The World Health Organization, for instance, prefers “gender transformative” approaches (Gupta, Whelan, and Allendorf, 2002). These approaches “highlight, challenge, and ultimately change harmful gender norms and beliefs” (National Council on Gender, 2012, 2). The Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG) of the United States Agency for International Development defines gender transformative programs as those which “actively strive to examine, question, and change rigid gender norms and imbalance of power... [as well as] encourage critical awareness among men and women of gender roles and norms” (Greene & Levack, 2010, 4). These programs have been found to be more effective on key outcomes of interest than programs that are not gender-transformative (Barker, Ricardo, & Nascimento, 2007).

One of the leading experts on gender transformative programming worldwide is the Brazil-based Promundo organization, which originated in 1997 to study, implement programming, and achieve policy change in the areas of gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health. In conjunction with partnering organizations, Promundo developed Program H to engage adolescent males in the fight for gender equality. Research reveals it significantly impacts gender-equitable beliefs and sexual health behaviors (Pulerwitz, Barker, & Segundo, 2004). After implementation and validation by the Brazilian, Mexican and Indian governments, this program was included in the 2005 UNFPA and 2007 UNICEF reports, suggesting it is effective in improving attitudes regarding gender equality. Program H was also awarded a 3^o Award for Best Practices by the Pan-American Health Organization and World Health Organization (Ricardo, Nascimento, Fonseca, & Segundo, 2010) and is recommended by the National Council on Gender in the United States (National Council on Gender, 2012).

The program has yet to be implemented in the United States, however, and programs such as Promundo are rarely implemented with elementary school children. In a review conducted in conjunction with Promundo, Ricardo, Eads, and Barker (2011) discovered 21 sexual violence prevention programs implemented throughout the world to “younger teens” aged 12 to 15. There are over twice as many programs which target “older teens” aged 15 to 19 years of age. Half of the programs for younger teens are implemented in the United States, but none reportedly include children younger than age eleven and all are actually designed for implementation to seventh graders, specifically, or middle school students more generally.

In addition, virtually none of the “younger teen” programs in the United States have been shown to improve attitudes about gender roles or attitudes about women. Few actually assess change on these outcomes, however, opting instead to assess change in sexual health and sexual violence more directly (Ricardo, Eads, & Barker, 2011). The exception to this—the Wise Guys program—is primarily a pregnancy prevention program for middle and high school aged boys (Gruchow & Brown, 2011). So while the key international organizations discussed above advocate that gender transformation ought to start at an early age, and while research highlights the salience of early childhood experiences in influencing adult male attitudes (Levtov, Barker, Contreras-Urbina, Heilman, & Verma, 2014),

few programs do so. This is likely because topics related to sexual activity and sexuality are considered age-inappropriate for pre-adolescent, elementary school aged boys. Programming that seeks to challenge and transform gender socialization can, however, be designed without the inclusion of sexual content.

As such, the present study adapted Promundo’s Program H to focus on gender socialization, gender beliefs, and emotional expression in order to implement the program with a younger age group. Gender transformative programming has traditionally been implemented in gender-specific groups, to the criticism of some (e.g. Fleming, Lee, & Dworkin, 2014). Many organizations now advocate for gender synchronicity—uniting males and females to act as allies in the pursuit of gender equity—in program implementation (Greene & Levack, 2010). Program H can be and has been implemented in both same-sex and mixed-sex groups. Because it was originally developed for implementation with males, and because boys were deemed as more in need of gender transformative programming by school officials in the present study’s implementation site, we chose to implement our adapted version of Program H to boys only.

Methods

The adapted version of Program H was implemented in seven lessons by two teachers of elementary school aged boys during the last five weeks of the school year in 2014 at an urban school in the southeastern United States. The lessons included activities designed to increase awareness of gender inequities and to help them learn how to positively deal with negative emotions. The ultimate goal was to reduce attitudes conducive to gender-based violence. Because of scheduling complications, the curriculum was taught to a single class of ten boys (aged 10 and 11 years). All were African-American, which was to be expected given that the school is 96 percent African American. While specific socio-economic data was not collected from the boys or their parents, this school is located in an impoverished area and 100 percent of its students are eligible for free/reduced meals (Department of Student Services, 2014).

These boys were placed in a single class together because they were labeled as “intervention” students who are a part of the state and school

district's "Early Intervention Program." This program "is designed to serve students who are at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level performance. The purpose is to provide additional instructional resources to help students who are performing below grade level obtain the necessary academic skills to reach grade level performance in the shortest possible time" (Richmond County Board of Education, 2014). Students are primarily flagged for inclusion in this program due to low scores on placement and standardized exams, such as the state's Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCTs). The program teachers also reported, however, that these boys often have problematic home lives that place them at-risk in broader ways. Problems at home manifest themselves in multiple ways, including poor academic performance, disciplinary issues at school, and governmental contact with their families via social services or law enforcement.

Intervention

The authors reviewed Promundo's Program H along with the local program partners: the school principal, the two teachers who implement the lessons, and the local rape crisis director. Seven lessons were chosen and adapted for the youth. The seven lessons included interactive activities about the violence the boys experienced in their lives; gender behaviors and expectations; the association of male "honor" and violence; being in touch with and expressing emotions; understanding and expressing anger in non-destructive ways; and conflict resolution.

The first lesson is a violence clothesline in which the young men are asked to reveal the violence they practice and the violence practiced against them. This lesson is meant to help participants think about the acts of violence they perpetrate, to take ownership for this violence, and to think about the pain that violence causes. Promundo literature makes the case that thinking about the pain caused by past acts of violence is a potential way of interrupting the victim-to-aggressor cycle of violence. The second session intends to help the boys recognize the challenges men and women face in fulfilling societal gender expectations and to understand these are not innate characteristics; rather, they vary across individuals and even change over the course of a person's life. Much of this lesson focuses on what it means

to “Act like a man” and “Not act like a girl” and seeks to illustrate how ideas such as these are limiting. The importance of men and women being able to express their selves in a variety of ways is emphasized. The third lesson focuses on male honor and has the boys develop skits in which a young man’s honor is called into question. Discussion centers on how to reduce tension in such situations and how real men can walk away from a fight. The fourth and fifth lessons focus on emotions. The fourth lesson focuses on identifying anger and expressing it in non-destructive, positive ways. In the lesson, teachers work with the boys on ways of expressing their anger through spoken words that share how they feel rather than by yelling or becoming aggressive and acting out in violence. Then, the fifth lesson emphasizes that emotions are normal and not bad or good but a part of being human. The point is that although it can be difficult to express certain emotion, it can be a problem to either suppress or exaggerate emotions; rather, there are positive and healthy ways to express the incredibly diverse array of emotions that humans experience. The final lesson is a fairly standard lesson on creative resolution of conflict in which role playing is used to help the boys find non-violent and culturally-appropriate ways to solve conflicts. With one exception, each of the lessons were adapted almost verbatim from two sections of Promundo’s Program H: “From Violence to Coexistence” and “Reasons and Emotions” (available via Promundo’s website, www.promundo.org.br). The second lesson regarding gender roles and expectations was adapted from the “Act like a man; Act like a woman” lesson available through the Interagency Gender Working Group website as well as activity seven in Promundo’s Program M for women and girls.

The program began with two days of pretests and introductions. Each of the boys who had parental consent to be in the study were excused from class for approximately 20 minutes in pairs or groups of three to learn about the program and the current study, and to complete a pretest survey. The current authors (all white college professors, one male and two female) jointly sat with the boys and explained that their teacher and the Physical Education coach at the school were going to be teaching some special lessons about emotions and how girls and boys are treated. The boys were instructed that the survey asks questions that have no right or wrong answers, and that their answers would be used to understand what they

learned from the program. To avoid any issues with literacy or reading comprehension, all questions were read aloud by the researchers (or, if requested, the boy himself). After all lessons were completed, the three authors returned to the school to implement posttest surveys using the same method as the pretests.

The male researcher then completed interviews with the program teachers. The interview was conducted with both teachers simultaneously and was semi-structured, consisting primarily of open-ended questions related to the teachers' perceptions of the curriculum, the success of the lessons, and the overall experience of the students. Further questions were geared towards uncovering what the teachers identify as some of the more severe challenges facing this specific group of young men and their classmates at the school.

Measures

Promundo's Gender Equity Men Scale is typically used in its program evaluations (Pulerwitz & Barker, 2008). Because of the program's focus on sexual health and sexual violence, however, most of the scale items reference sexual or dating activity. Because of a concern that such content would not resonate with the younger population of ten-year-old boys—and the added difficulty in achieving Board of Education approval to incorporate sexual content into the classroom for this age group—the GEM Scale was not utilized. Survey measures were instead adapted from those utilized by Men Can Stop Rape in evaluations of their Men of Strength clubs. These clubs are implemented with young men in junior high and high school. Program evaluation measures assess attitudes and beliefs regarding masculinity, gender norms and social responsibility, as well as intended responses to witnessing mistreatment (Anderson, 2011). Several measures are also related to beliefs in rape myths and thus have a sexual connotation and were omitted. Attitudes towards emotional expression were assessed by constructing additional items, both closed and open-ended.

Results

Quantitative Outcomes: Self-Reported Attitudes and Beliefs

While all boys in the class were subject to the lessons, we present data on just seven boys (70 percent of program participants). Parental consent was not obtained for two of the boys and one boy was absent for the posttest. As previously mentioned, each boy was African-American in a single class of ten boys in an impoverished inner-city school in the southeastern United States. As indicated in [Table 1](#), many of the boys gave pretest answers that fit the goal of this program. For instance, all of the boys thought girls and boys should be treated the same; over half agreed it was okay for young men to feel afraid, affectionate, sad and happy and that showing emotions is okay. However, on other questions, more than half indicated that young men should be brave, they should not back down from a fight, and that men are born to be tough and in control. More than half also indicated that their friends would think less of them if they walked away from a fight. Only 42.9 percent felt it was okay for boys to feel angry.

We performed comparison of means tests to determine whether there was a significant difference in answers to the survey questions before and after the completion of the Promundo-adapted curriculum. As [Table 1](#) indicates, there was only one significant change over time. While less than half of the boys (42.9 percent) agreed that it was okay for boys to feel angry before the implementation of the curriculum, a full 100 percent agreed that it was okay for boys to feel angry after the curriculum.

It is important to note that the comparison of means found no other significant differences between pre- and post-test. However, some nonsignificant changes that are consistent with program goals are worth noting. On items related to *general emotional expression*, two more boys agreed that men should not have problems expressing their emotions and one additional boy felt it was okay for men to show their true emotions. On items more specific to particular emotions, results were less clear. One fewer boy agreed that men should not cry; one additional boy believed it was okay for boys to feel affectionate. Two additional boys felt it was not okay for boys to feel afraid and one fewer boy felt it was okay for boys to feel sad. On items related to *fighting and violence*, results were also mixed;

one fewer boy agreed that men should not back down from a fight and one additional boy agreed that men should never hit women or girls. Only three of the seven boys agreed that young men should never hit another young man, which did not change over time. Additionally, the boys were in greater agreement that it is important for them to be ready to fight when challenged and that sometimes violence is the only way to express their feelings. Effects were also mixed for the two items regarding *beliefs in gender equality* (whether men and women/boys and girls should be treated the same) and for questions regarding men’s dominance (being in control). While there was no change over time on whether “men are born to be tough and in control,” two additional boys agreed that young men should be the ones in control; however, this could mean in control of a situation or relationship, or in control of their emotions. The latter possibility is interesting, given that the program teachers reported in their post-program interview that they spent a lot of time trying to help the boys feel it was okay for them to be honest about their feelings and emotions.

Table 1
Comparison of Means Tests (n=7)

	Pretest % Agree/Yes	Posttest % Agree/Yes	Signif of T- Tests
Girls and boys should be treated the same.	100	85.7	.356
Young men should be brave.	100	100	*
Young men should have no problem expressing their emotions.	42.9	71.4	.356
Young men should be the ones in control.	57.1	85.7	.172
Young men should not back down from a fight.	71.4	57.1	.604
Young men should not cry.	28.6	14.3	.604
Young men should not show their true emotions.	42.9	28.6	.356

Young men should never hit another young man.	42.9	42.9	1.00
Young men should never hit a woman or girl.	71.4	85.7	.356
It is okay for boys to feel afraid.	100	71.4	.172
It is okay for boys to feel affectionate.	71.4	100	.172
It is okay for boys to feel sad.	100	85.7	.356
It is okay for boys to feel happy.	100	100	*
<i>It is okay for boys to feel angry.</i>	42.9	100	.030
Men are born to be tough and in control.	SA 71.4 N 14.3 D 14.3	SA 71.4 N 14.3 D 14.3	1.00
It is important for me to be right in a discussion or argument.	SA 14.3 A 28.6 D 28.6 SD 28.6	SA 28.6 A 28.6 D 28.6 SD 14.3	.103
Sometimes violence is the only way for me to express my feelings.	SA 14.3 A 28.6 D 28.6 SD 28.6	A 28.6 N 28.6 D 28.6	.407
If I walk away from a fight, my friends will think less of me.	SA 28.6 A 57.1 SD 14.3	SA 28.6 A 42.9 N 14.3 D 14.3	1.000
It is important for me to speak up in support of people who are not being treated right.	SA 42.9 A 28.6 D 14.3 SD 14.3	SA 57.1 A 28.6 D 14.3	.508
It is important for me to be ready to fight when challenged.	SA 14.3 N 14.3 D 71.4	SA 28.6 A 14.3 N 14.3 D 42.9	.111
It is important to me that men and women are treated the same.	SA 57.1 A 28.6 SD 14.3	SA 71.4 A 28.6	.356

What would you do if you heard a classmate insult one of your friends or call your friend a bad name?	Tell to stop	Tell to stop	.689
	28.6	28.6	
	Get Teacher	Get Teacher	
	57.1	57.1	
	Ask if needed	Ask if needed	
	help 14.3	help 14.3	
What would you do if you heard a classmate insult your mom or call her a bad name?	Tell to stop	Tell to stop	NA
	85.7	85.7	
	Nothing but	Nothing but	
	would bother	would bother	
	14.3	14.3	
What would you do if you heard a classmate insult a girl or call her a bad name?	Tell to stop	Tell to stop	.604
	42.9	28.6	
	Get Teacher	Get Teacher	
	42.9	57.1	
	Ask if needed	Ask if needed	
	help 14.3	help 14.3	

(SA = Strongly Agree, A= Agree, N= Neutral, D= Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.)
 NA = Standard error of the difference is 0 so the correlation and T cannot be computed.

Qualitative Outcomes: Post-program Interviews with Program Teachers

In spite of the limited nature of this pilot research, the interview conducted with the program instructors provides some useful insights into the challenges, realities and sociological nuance involved in the larger movement to incorporate gender-transformative approaches into anti-violence programming.

The Promundo-adapted program teachers reported that lessons “went well,” were “all very necessary,” and were good for the boys because “lots of our kids are super-aggressive, super-competitive... [and] punch walls and shove each other a lot, in anger.” The physical education teacher who was implementing the Promundo-adapted program stated: “In [physical education] class, the boys will really want to fight over a “bad” call in a game. What they really need to learn is how to react positively when in conflict, or when challenged, disrespected.”

In terms of the specific content of the curriculum, four lessons seem to be most potentially useful in this specific research context. These are, firstly, the third lesson which discusses walking away from a fight when honor is challenged and the related topics of pride, sport, and competition. Lessons 4, 5 and 6, which deal with positive, adaptive expression and resolution of emotions, were also especially useful.

The teachers reported that most of the participating boys felt special because of the small scale of the program implementation, but were also concerned that “until you break that wall [down], they gonna say what they think you want to hear.” A desire to please or say the right thing may have been exacerbated by their status as Early Intervention Program students, since they had some history of disciplinary issues. Some may even have viewed the program as an additional intervention or even somewhat of a punishment. The program teachers both spoke to this issue at different points during their post-program interviews. For instance:

I sense a little bit of that [influence of the stigma of the Early Intervention Program] all the time. I do hear some of them saying “we’re in a special ed class” from time to time. They do tend to sense that something is up when they are together in settings that are different than what they’re used to. That can make them uncomfortable, shut them down.

The other teacher followed up on this comment by stating, “They do sense something is up when they’re all together, singled out from the other students and all.” He also emphasized the “need to come up with ways to make them feel safe to talk about emotions and personal issues.” Teachers also reportedly felt the program and the Early Intervention Program students would benefit by including non-EIP students and students from other grade levels. Teachers also felt the program length should be extended.

Finally, the teachers made statements that suggest a broader need for anti-violence programming within the school. When asked about the scale of interpersonal violence at the school, “Coach”, a veteran of the school, relayed that the most extreme scene he could recall played out just last year and broke out in the midst of a charity fundraiser. He reported that two

female students started fighting and soon other boys and girls “swarmed”, taking the opportunity to engage in violence as well.

Discussion

Overall, self-reported data from surveys reveal only one significant change over time: boys were more likely to agree it was okay to feel angry. There were a number of mixed effects regarding emotional expression, gender equality, and fighting and violence, though all were statistically insignificant. Many of these insignificant effects were, however, in a positive direction in line with program goals.

Results from interviews with the program teachers suggest they feel the program has value because the lessons are appropriate for the needs of students at the school. Teachers also discussed the possibility that some of the participants may have felt a need to, as their teacher explained, “say what they think you want to hear.” This may have been a particular issue at pretest when the program was unfamiliar, which could be a reason for the mixed and insignificant outcomes. However, it should be noted that the sample size for this pilot study is extremely small and thus significant differences are difficult to detect in the first place.

Teachers also hinted at girls’ enactment of violence, though. If the ultimate goal is indeed the construction, implementation, and fluid evaluation of a program that actually gives children the tools they need to live lives of peace and gender equality, by reducing attitudes which perpetuate the cycle of violence, then these data suggest the critics (Fleming, Lee, & Dworkin, 2014) have a point. Broader efforts should include girls as well. Moreover, because the current data also suggest diversity within program participants would be of value, gender-transformative programs should promote inclusivity in many ways, to be inclusive of children with myriad identity factors---gender identity, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and ethnicity among them.

Future Directions

In line with the results of this pilot study, the research team and local rape crisis director (who is consulting and funding the program) made several

modifications in advance of the spring 2015 implementation. Firstly, the program will be implemented with a larger and more varied group of fourteen boys. Half will be in fourth grade and half in fifth grade. These boys will be from different classes throughout the school and are not all involved in the Early Intervention Program. The students were selected after program teachers solicited recommendations from administrators and additional fourth and fifth grade teachers. Two of the fourth graders and two of the fifth graders were rated by teachers to have high disciplinary problems; similarly two fourth and two fifth grade students were rated as having very little to no disciplinary issues. The others were rated as moderate. The majority of the fifth grade boys selected for the second implementation were a part of the pilot study, by design, as teachers and the rape crisis director wished to incorporate peer mentoring.

Secondly, and related to the mentoring aspect, teachers suggested the program provide more time for all involved to interact in a non-instructional setting or context. This is expected to facilitate mentoring and relationship-building between students and teachers, as well as increase student buy-in and engagement. As such, a kickoff pizza party and activity hour was hosted for incoming program participants in December 2014. A second activity hour in early January 2015 allowed the students to personalize and decorate the supplies and storage containers they will be using during the program. An off-campus field trip to the local university will take place midway through the program and program completion will be celebrated with a graduation ceremony that will follow the program's final curricular element--a drama performance.

Thirdly, modifications were made to the curriculum itself. The primary change involves the interactive components of the program. While the Program H curriculum currently involves a number of interactive elements—brainstorming exercises, group assignments, role playing, writing and performing skits—the lessons most appropriate for our younger population involve short-term interactive elements. They do not formally ask or require students to revisit tasks completed in previous lessons and explicitly utilize that knowledge later on in the program. For the second program implementation, the curriculum will involve a long term interactive project where students will keep and store products of early lessons and revisit them in the creation of a play or series of skits that they

will perform upon program completion. This will allow certain lessons to be reiterated over time, culminating in a performance wherein the boys model positive conflict resolution and emotion management skills in situations where one may be tempted to use violence and/or wherein one's masculinity is threatened or challenged.

Lastly, program teachers will provide feedback more regularly and in a manner that will provide additional qualitative, process evaluation data. The two program teachers will complete brief additional surveys with both closed and open ended questions after each lesson. This will include notes on discussions and general student learning that took place in that day's session. In total, there will be at least fifteen sessions, inclusive of all of the activities and events described above. The implementation schedule is flexible to allow for one lesson to be delivered in more than one class session if needed.

Overall, the implementation of these changes should enhance student exposure to gender-transformative lessons, increase student engagement, and facilitate peer and teacher mentoring. It is our hope that these changes will translate to improved program effects that may lead to broader social change. Those of us studied in the area of social change, of course, recognize that structural or institutional social change is easier said than done, and requires untold amounts of exertion on the part of agents and participants of that change. Through these changes, and by implementing the program with a somewhat more diverse group of boys (who are not all a part of the Early Intervention Program), we can better understand if this particular adaptation of the internationally recognized Promundo program can indeed transform gender beliefs in such a youthful, American population.

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Gloria Anzaldúa's Seven Stages of Conocimiento in Redefining Latino Masculinity: José's Story

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Gloria Anzaldúa’s Seven Stages of “Conocimiento” in Redefining Latino Masculinity: José’s Story

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Abstract

Using a case study method, this article applies the Chicana feminist framework of Conocimiento as proposed by Gloria Anzaldúa to analyze the transformation of one individual as he readjusts to family life after imprisonment. José’s story is presented in detail and begins with his arrest, conviction and time in prison for selling drugs. After his release from prison to live with his family in Northern California, the narrative then shifts to illustrate the principles of Conocimiento used by Jose’s feminist sisters as a viable tool for transforming masculinities. According to the writings by Gloria Anzaldúa, the process of Conocimiento consists of seven stages that help individuals to reconsider and readjust their ideas, motivations, and beliefs, all in the service of moving forward in their lives. Conocimiento, in conjunction with an environment of caring broadly defined as community, family, and educators, can indeed offer valuable lessons in transforming Latino masculinities.

Keywords: Latino masculinity, case study, feminism

Siete estados de “Conocimiento” de Gloria Anzaldúa en la Redefinición de la Masculinidad Latina: La Historia de la Vida de José’

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Resumen

Analizando un caso en detalle, este artículo aplica lo que llaman las feministas chicanas el método de Conocimiento. El método, primeramente propuesto por Gloria Anzaldúa, es aplicado en el análisis de la transformación de un individuo cuando se reintegra a su familia después de estar previamente encarcelada. El caso de José empieza con su arresto, convicción y su tiempo en prisión por traficar en drogas. La narrativa cambia después de que José termina su condena y va a vivir con sus hermanas y el resto de su familia en el norte de California. El enfoque es en el proceso de Conocimiento usado por las hermanas de José para ayudarlo a reajustarse a su vida familiar y transformar sus ideas de la masculinidad. De acuerdo con los escritos de Gloria Anzaldúa, el proceso de Conocimiento tiene siete etapas que ayudan al individuo a recapacitar y reajustar sus ideas, sus motivaciones, sus creencias, todo en el servicio para moverse adelante en sus vidas. Conocimiento, en este caso, es usado conjunto con un ambiente familiar, en comunidad, y con la ayuda de educadores, para ofrecer lecciones importantes para transformar las masculinidades latinas.

Palabras clave: masculinidad latina, estudio de caso study, feminismo



“**P**epe anda muy mal. Tienen que hablarle. Tenemos miedo de que las cosas no acaben bien (Pepe is on the wrong path. You have to call him. We are afraid that things will not end well).” This was the content of the long-distance phone I received from my cousin living in Minnesota. My cousin was worried about my brother who was being tagged by the police for rumored drug sales. My brother was not a big-time dealer, just one who was trying to survive as well as maintain his habit. I tried but never reached my brother by phone. Then it happened. An undercover DEA agent¹ set up what seemed like a drug deal of a lifetime for someone not used to the “big time.” José (a.k.a. Pepe² within the family) took the bait, hoping to score enough resources to help support his girlfriend and her two children. The drug deal was intentionally planned to require crossing over state lines, making it a federal offense subject to a long and mandatory prison sentence. Under federal law, a sentencing judge has almost no discretion to depart from strict sentencing guidelines after someone is convicted of a federal drug offense. Under the Federal sentencing guidelines, José was facing a minimum sentence of five years and a maximum of 25 years. Our sister Arcelia, who at the time of his sentencing was a public defender in California and was well versed in sentencing proceedings, immediately flew to Iowa where José’s trial was being held. In an imposing federal courthouse, she tearfully testified on José’s behalf, relating his family background, his character, and the family’s love for him. Based on her testimony, proof of his honorable discharge from the U.S. Navy, a lack of criminal history, and a character statement from José’s high school basketball coach, the judge did something miraculous: he sentenced José to the absolute minimum possible under the law—five years and three months in federal prison. Most individuals convicted of the same offense would receive somewhere between the minimum and maximum sentences, approximately 15 years, especially if no one advocates for them. Many judges are not socialized to see the possible good beyond a brown person in shackles and perceive convicted men of Color as nothing more than their penal transgressions. José’s fate was signed, sealed, delivered—five years and three months in prison and four years of probation. His life belonged to the criminal justice system for the next nine years.

In March of 2005 José was released to a halfway house in Salinas, California, where he was to reside for six months until he would be released to live with our family, 36 miles north in the city of Santa Cruz. For the next five years, José would dedicate his life to seeking redemption for all that had happened during and before his incarceration— experiences that had led him to his current status as a parolee, living in the care of his family in a new community, in a strange region of the country, with few prospects for his future. The dominant narrative is that the former inmate would be out of prison for a year at most before returning to drugs and eventually to prison. Given the challenges José was facing, what were the chances that José could escape such a dire prediction? And for our purposes here, what could the writings by Chicana feminists offer to help change the expected course already assigned to him? Below I provide some answers.

Intersectional Identities at Work: José’s Story

To examine how the feminist principles embodied in intersectionality are factors in life situations, I use José’s experiences as a testimonio (testimony). At the end of his prison term, José was released to live close to three of his sisters, all of whom identify and live as feminists³. He also joined an extended family of lawyers who have worked as public defenders, as well as my husband, Professor Craig Haney, who is a renowned expert on prison conditions and readjustment after incarceration. However, even with these significant resources, formerly incarcerated individuals rarely succeed in “making it” after release from prison. Even notable families such as the Kennedy’s contain sad trajectories of many family members who were never able to overcome their addictions.

This case study is a feminist example that takes context, community, relationships, and a redefinition of masculinity to help one individual overcome the deleterious effects of incarceration and find redemption. I relate from my personal standpoint how I, together with my family, and our community applied, without conscious intent, the theoretical underpinnings of Chicana feminisms and intersectionality to help José reintegrate into his family and his newfound community in Northern California.

Contextual Factors: La Red (The Network) of Caring

Fortunately for my brother, his family happened to live in a community widely known for its liberal politics, feminist leanings, and ethics of caring. Santa Cruz is a progressive college town that supports non-traditional behaviors of all sorts. In particular, there is a general commitment to de-stigmatize previous incarceration as exhibited in the city government, which, for the most part, assumes that individuals are capable of change and understands that contextual factors can contribute to negative behaviors. Drug addiction, in particular, is de-stigmatized. Drug use is perceived as not necessarily deviant but as socially constructed. Criminalizing drug use is seen as the means by which the state punishes particular populations. In this community, José did not automatically stand out, either by appearance or by previous history. Although a predominantly white community⁴, the population of Santa Cruz is largely dedicated to extending a degree of tolerance toward all citizens with a lively street life with many non-traditional residents. This street life my brother found ideologically congruent with his views as he considered himself an “aging hippie” with a deep love for the music, particularly the genres of blues and rock-and-roll. He felt an openness and fellowship with Santa Cruz residents, especially those who embraced alternative lifestyles. In such a community, he began to heal from past stigmas and found camaraderie with “street people” by engaging in “pick up” games of chess, befriending several “homeless” (or non-housed, as called in Santa Cruz) individuals, and occasionally treating them to coffee or giving them a few dollars for food. He would often sit with them on one of the many benches lining the main street in downtown Santa Cruz and catching up on what was happening in their lives.

Integral to this ethos of caring is the large network of nonprofit organizations in the city of Santa Cruz that, working in tandem with county agencies, are committed to a philosophy of rehabilitation and recovery. Among the many nonprofits in Santa Cruz County dedicated to rehabilitation are Barrios Unidos, Defensa de Mujeres, Hermanas, Fenix, Friends Outside, GEMMA, Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Service, R.I.S.E., SI SE PUEDE (Yes You Can), Santa Cruz Youth Services, and Santa Cruz Probation Services. Crucial to José’s reintegration, however, was the nonprofit organization Barrios Unidos, expertly managed under the

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directorship of Nane Alejandrez. Of the many factors that led José to redirect his path, Barrios and the guidance provided by its staff were indeed central to Jose not returning to prison.

The Role Of Barrios Unidos In José’s Journey To Reintegration

The organization of Barrios Unidos (BU) started in 1977 as a community-based movement dedicated to ending urban violence in California. In 1993, Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos became a nonprofit organization dedicated to the prevention and curtailment of “violence amongst youth within Santa Cruz County by providing them with life enhancing alternatives”⁵. BU, as it is commonly known, adheres to five primary strategies to accomplish its mission: 1) leadership and human capital development, 2) civic participation and community mobilization, 3) cultural arts and recreational activities, and 4) coalition building. Over the course of many years, BU has developed a model that seeks to reclaim and restore the lives of struggling Latino youth and men while promoting unity among families and neighbors through community building. BU aligns itself with the philosophy developed during the Chicano Movement and identified in the writing of Chicano activist Corky Gonzalez who drew a “straight line of cause and effect between the loss of cultural identity and the frustrations, anger, and breakdown of communal fabric that led to gang and family violence,” according to Acosta (2007, p.xli). The leaders of BU committed themselves to:

[S]piritual expression and indigenous ceremony centerpieces of their theory of social change. To them it had become evident that standard conventional interventions alone, emphasizing either constructive alternatives to violence and crime or official criminal sanctions, could not be relied upon to solve the problems of Latino or other youth involved in gang and related antisocial activities. Instead, as they saw it, cultural awakening, awareness, and respect were the essential keys to progress. As a result, *Cultura es Cura* (Culture is the Cure) came to be known as BU’s guiding philosophical tenet, and a wide array of alternative healing and consciousness-raising practices came to anchor the organization’s efforts. This was considered groundbreaking, faith-based work aimed at ending the violence in communities across

America. Much of BU's development in this direction was inspired by indigenous Native American traditions and influences, including those extending back to the origins of tribal civilizations throughout the Americas (p. xliv).

From its inception, Barrios Unidos was in coalition with other organizations, progressive women and other allies that were dedicated to helping men of Color reintegrate after incarceration and to preventing the violence rampant in many Latino/a communities. BU has a network of political allies that are highly visible in the public arena. Among the strong supporters of BU and its founder Nane Alejandrez are the singer and activist Harry Belafonte, the actor and activist Danny Glover, and the co-founder of the United Farm Workers' Union Dolores Huerta. Another important contributor to the mission of BU is Ms. Connie (Constance) Rice⁶ (Acosta, 2007). Ms. Rice is head of the Los Angeles-based Advancement Project dedicated to engineering "large-scale systems change to remedy inequality, expand opportunity and open paths to upward mobility. Our goal is that members of all communities have the safety, opportunity and health they need to thrive".⁷ The Advancement Project focuses on four areas: educational equity, equity in public funds, healthy city, and urban peace. Ms. Rice's allegiance to BU is particularly aligned with the latter area of focus—urban peace—which entails a commitment to "reduce and prevent community violence, making poor neighborhoods safer so that children can learn, families can thrive and communities can prosper".⁸

Ms. Rice is one of the most widely recognized and effective civil rights attorneys in the country. Her dedication to BU's mission stems from an overall concern with the well-being of communities of Color. The fate of the men who come from these communities is not independent of the long-term health of the families living in these communities. As Ms. Rice states: "Families are losing an entire generation and community of men to incarceration related to drugs, gang association, and street violence. Even a ferocious feminist like me knows that if you take the men out of the community, the community dies" (Acosta, 2007, p.177). This is a crucial point in understanding the demands of masculinity and the effects of drugs on poor communities. Masculinity demands silence about areas of vulnerabilities that may bring shame and loss of pride to the self. The exaltation of the "silent man" or the "indifferent man" may have merit, but

equally viable and less acknowledged is the possibility that many men feel as much as women but they are not provided with the language or opportunity to articulate their fears. For many poor men, the social and familial expectation of becoming providers is immensely stressful, particularly when there are few jobs available. Turning to drug dealing becomes a viable, if not the only viable, alternative to fulfilling the role of providers (Payne, 2006). That certainly was the case for José—at the time of his arrest, he was dealing in drugs as a way to provide for his girlfriend and her two children. They had become a family and the small town in Minnesota where they lived offered few employment opportunities for him to effectively provide for his new family. José took the fall for drug dealing and his relationship with his girlfriend and children fell apart after his incarceration.

Providing Safe Spaces: Barrios Unidos Philosophy of Acceptance, Personal Responsibility, And Cultural Restitution

When José was released from the halfway house, he needed an organization like BU, where not only the staff but also the founders and supporters, like Ms. Rice, understand the connection between drug dealing, economic survival, and the restrictions imposed by masculinity. Ms. Rice as well as other supporters knew José's story all too well and their efforts in aligning with BU is to prevent José and other formerly incarcerated men from returning to prison.

Formerly incarcerated individuals often need “a safe space,” a haven from the outside world where the norms and rules of interaction can be confusing and contradictory. The space provided by BU became the saving grace for my brother. At BU, Nane Alejandre and his team established a norm of non-judgmental and spiritual acceptance. Upon entering Barrios, the men usually receive a hug and a greeting that makes reference to “the creator” as the source of guidance and solace. It is a place that does not tolerate drug or alcohol use. In every meeting the philosophy of the organization is re-inscribed verbally and through ritual. Staff meetings begin with everyone standing in a circle, thanking the creator for another day and for the opportunity to do good deeds in the world. Sage is burned and the ancestors are summoned to oversee the organization's activities and

goals. The safe space created in Barrios Unidos is extended to the small parcel of land the organization owns in the hills of the Santa Cruz Mountains. BU built a sweat lodge as a gathering place for different groups of men to come together to sweat and “detox” their bodies as well as their minds. The philosophy developed by Barrios Unidos and the various founders of the organization was to aid men of all ages (and to a lesser extent, girls and young women) who have been institutionalized and need to re-enter society by inhabiting the transitional sacred space provided by the organization.

When José left the halfway house, the conditions of his parole required that he obtain a job within a couple of weeks. He was given a list of potential employers—businesses that had volunteered to hire individuals who had been incarcerated. Most of the jobs were entry level, paying low wages, and highly competitive given the scarcity of opportunities for individuals exiting a halfway house. José suffered several rejections and there were no clear employment prospects in sight. Every rejection was painful for my brother, only reminding him of the stigma attached to someone just released from prison. I stopped sleeping and began to worry that José would be returned to prison if he were unable to find a job. The very thought of his potential incarceration drove me into a frenzy of despair. The week before the employment deadline set by José’s parole officer, I met with Nane and other BU staff over another matter⁹ for breakfast at a local diner. As we were leaving, Nane asked me how my brother was doing. I told him that José was having trouble finding a job and I could not face the prospect of his return to prison. I burst into tears and Nane leaned over, put his hand on my shoulder, and said, “We are not going to let that happen.” I could hardly believe that his dedication to keeping my brother home was as strong as my own. We made arrangements for my brother to be hired by Barrios Unidos for a temporary part-time job, with enough hours and responsibilities to keep José home. Nane wisely told me as my brother began work, “We’ll see how it goes after three months. Sometimes it works out, and sometimes it doesn’t.” His warning felt like an honest assessment of the situation. He did not know my brother or his skills, and most importantly, he did not know whether José would fit with the philosophy of kindness, gentleness, and acceptance fostered at Barrios Unidos. Nane’s warning also made me aware of the great risk he was taking

in giving my brother this opportunity. I felt more grateful than ever because unlike me, he did not know my brother and yet he was willing to put himself and his organization on the line for a stranger. I felt the power of acceptance and faith promoted by Barrios Unidos and embodied by Nane Alejandrez. Barrios was indeed an organization of last resort for the many men of all ages who cannot find recourse if they want to change their lives away from the streets and back into their communities. I was humbled by Nane's help.

Fortunately, José's part-time employment at BU was extended after three months. In fact, he became a fulltime employee and stayed on as a valued member of Nane Alejandrez's team for two years. For José, BU became a source for community and belonging. BU's emphasis on the restitution of Chicano/a culture and the use of indigenous rituals were an essential aspect of José's recovery. Whereas Jose was heavily opposed to twelve-step programs because of their Western, Judeo-Christian religious emphasis, BU's philosophy of *la Cultura es Cura* (the Cure is Culture) resonated with Jose's worldview. Furthermore, BU's dedication to youth reignited José's passion for making a difference in young people's lives. José had been an extraordinary athlete playing varsity basketball in high school. He had even played briefly for the local college in South Texas after he finished his seven-and-half-year volunteer stint in the navy. His dream job had always been to become a high school English teacher and basketball coach combining his love of sports with his love of books and interacting with young people. Through his work at BU, José was inspired by the young people at the organization and began to find a new path in his life.

The next question that arose was how could we help José implement his newfound inspiration to work with young people in an educational setting.

Public Education Committed to Rehabilitation

Community College

After José's temporary employment at BU was settled, the subject of college was raised during one of the regular family meetings my two sisters and I had with him. All three sisters held advanced degrees and we believed

education had been our salvation from the grueling work both of our parents had been locked into in South Texas. Our parents were immigrants and had not had the educational opportunities we had being raised in the United States. Our father was a farmworker and died prematurely from a heart attack at the age of 59. As an uninsured farmworker, he never had access to regular medical health care to adequately attend to his diabetes. Together our parents never earned more than \$15,000 a year while raising four children in the border town of McAllen, Texas. In light of our family's history, we knew that José's long-term success was highly dependent on obtaining an education. José had the advantage of always excelling academically in school, which included his graduating with honors from high school and obtaining advanced technological training when he joined the navy shortly after graduation. When he was honorably discharged seven and half years later, he attempted college several times unsuccessfully until he finally obtained an associate's degree from Worthington Community College¹⁰ a few years before he was arrested in Worthington, Minnesota.

As a professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), I knew many of the professors and administrators on campus. I contacted a fellow Chicano, Francisco Hernández, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs to help me find the appropriate channels to guide my brother's academic plan. Vice Chancellor Hernandez referred me to Ronaldo Ramirez, who at the time was working in the Office of Development. His wife Olga Nájera-Ramirez was a professor in the department of anthropology. Both Ronaldo and Olga had helped members of their extended families transfer from community college to four-year universities by engaging the help of Ms. Barbara Love, UCSC's Articulation Officer, who had been an effective liaison for these transfers. My brother and I made an appointment with Ms. Love after obtaining all of my brother's transcripts from his various excursions into higher education. Ms. Love was true to her name—a caring, knowledgeable, and non-judgmental staff person who never made my brother feel shame because at his late age (he was in his late 40s) attempting to begin a college degree as a reentry student. Furthermore, she did not blink when he laid out his educational trajectory during his incarceration where he had taken all of the limited number of training programs available to him. In fact she thoughtfully proposed ways in which the prison program certifications might earn him additional college credits.

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When we left Ms. Love's office, my brother and I hugged each other feeling hope for his future. Ms. Love had given him a series of courses to take at the local community college that would allow Jose to transfer to UCSC—a top-ranked research university. Ms. Love had demonstrated the open-mindedness prevalent at the university and in the city of Santa Cruz; she had not judged *a priori* someone's educational potential because of a previous history of incarceration.

The University

The University of California, Santa Cruz campus is a liberal institution dedicated to extending and dovetailing with the values of the surrounding community of Santa Cruz. The university is nationally recognized as having an extremely liberal faculty that consistently reinforces a view of incarceration as a social issue, and not as a result of individual failings. Faculty and administrative units on campus adhere to a philosophy of redemption and of extending resources and kindness to those who have been incarcerated. The staff, for the most part, is also dedicated to progressive ideas of collectivity and of providing assistance to those most in need, including those previously incarcerated. The university includes diverse staff in key positions of influence, many of whom have experienced the pain of having relatives incarcerated and the terrible impact that incarceration has on all family members.

When José successfully finished the community college courses necessary to transfer to UCSC, he found yet another network of caring and assistance that was also helpful in furthering his goal of obtaining a bachelor's degree. Below I outline several of the crucial units and staff members that were critical in Jose's educational success.

The Chicano Latino Ethnic Resource Center

The Chicano Latino Resource Center, or El Centro (The Center) as it is commonly known, was headed by Ms. Rosie Cabrera, who had graduated from San Jose State, a university 45 minutes from the city of Santa Cruz. Rosie, as most undergraduates know her, is responsible for providing culturally relevant programming and support to undergraduates; a side

benefit of her activities is the extensive involvement of Chicano Latino/a graduate students in El Centro's endeavors. Rosie received José with open arms. The Center was an important haven for José during his undergraduate years, as he was at least thirty years older than the typical undergraduate on campus. Rosie's inclusion of José in various student activities provided a transitional space for José as he ventured from the now familiar culture of BU to the student culture prevalent in undergraduate research universities. Rosie and El Centro became a second sacred space for José.

The Faculty

José attended UCSC for two years, completing a bachelor's degree in Community Studies at the end of this time. During his entire UCSC term, there was not a single faculty member who did not offer to extend themselves to help José with his educational endeavors. One particular professor who was critical to José's success at the university was Mike Rotkin, a lecturer in the Community Studies Department. Professor Rotkin took José under his wing and supported all of his efforts, including supervising his undergraduate thesis, which was based on the work he was performing at BU where he was counseling youth who had been pushed out of the K-12 school system. In addition to helping him with his thesis, Professor Rotkin became José's greatest advocate, writing him letters of recommendation when, upon graduation from UCSC, José decided to apply to the graduate school in social work at San Jose State University. Professor Rotkin wrote the following recommendation for Jose:

I am very pleased to give you my most positive reference for José Hurtado...I consider him the single, best-prepared student for this professional certification among the scores of thousands of students I have taught over the past forty-two years at the University of California, Santa Cruz. José has received nothing but straight As in our program, and as you will see in his overall transcript, the few grades he has received of less than an A are balanced by several A+ grades, something we do not issue very often here at UCSC Having been the Mayor of Santa Cruz, California, five times and elected to the City Council six times, I have a very good idea of what any community will expect of a person holding this professional

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license and I have absolutely no doubt that José is ready to move beyond his past and I know that he is well prepared for work as a LCSW. I also have taught in both men's and women's prisons in California.... José has completed his required federal probation without incident, and he is ready and willing to use what he learned....I was the academic supervisor of a full-time, six-month internship/field study that José conducted with Barrios Unidos and Youth Services here in Santa Cruz. José received glowing letters of evaluation from all of his supervisors in the field. His work for me is simply among the best I have ever received from a student working in the area of youth counseling. José is already working at a professional level and was assigned a counseling caseload (under supervision) at Youth Services while he was still an undergraduate student.... José has been in a unique position to reach some of the most intractable youth at various levels of gang affiliation and legal trouble. Many of the clients with whom he has been working, are at serious risk for a lifetime in the criminal justice system and José, ... is bilingual and quickly able to develop a rapport with the youth and their families....I have probably recommended a couple of hundred students to social work programs over the past three decades. I have never had a student who was better prepared to be an outstanding practitioner in the field of social work. José has a warm and engaging personality and quickly wins the affection and support of everyone with whom he works. His experience both in life and as a student has prepared him exceptionally well to be an outstanding professional in the field of social work.

I have quoted Prof. Rotkin's recommendation letter at length because of its detailed articulation of his views on the reintegration of previously incarcerated men. Furthermore, Prof. Rotkin's consistent message of hope for someone who has overcome a difficult past is not necessarily the norm, even in the most prestigious universities where faculty are highly educated about criminal justice issues. Prof. Rotkin's position is also illustrative of the relationships among the city of Santa Cruz, the elected officials of the city (he was both mayor and city council person multiple times), and the University. The significance of positive interactions and consistent views toward reintegration after incarceration should not be taken for granted in fortifying the chances for José's educational success. It is noteworthy that I did not personally know Prof. Rotkin. His interest in José's success was

purely as a teacher and a person interested in the well being of a male, reentry student, with a difficult past who was invested in maximizing his educational opportunities. No doubt that my brother's performance definitely influenced Prof. Rotkin's positive evaluations. My brother had always been an excellent student, even when in prison, but previously no one had taken the time and effort to reinforce his positive behaviors in the academy. Most importantly, although Prof. Rotkin's support was central to José's success, all of the faculty and staff José encountered at UCSC instilled in him a similar message of hope and inspiration that he was capable of forging a new life through education.

The Family (Extended by Friends)

Of course, the primary responsibility in helping José reintegrate once he left prison, was up to our immediate family, including my sisters, my husband, our children, our niece, our sister-in-law, and my elderly mother (beyond this, our larger extended family of uncles and cousins live in Mexico and we have had little or no contact with them over the years.) Not only were the ideas of reintegration and redemption of previously incarcerated individuals central to our beliefs as a family, but every single family member worked within, or had connection with, the criminal justice system—as lawyers (public defenders and public interest law), professors (writing about the criminal (in)justice system in the United States and abroad), and practitioners (social workers). However, it bears mentioning that our dedication as a family to fight for those mistreated in prison is not a safeguard that once a family member leaves prison, he will in fact survive the brutal realities of reintegration.

In addition to the immediate family, we are fortunate to have a network of friends that we consider part of our extended family, including fellow UCSC professors, graduate students, and staff members, who also undergirded our familial efforts. This extended familial network gave José a broader community who, at different times, played crucial roles in easing him over the difficult hurdles as José learned to be a free man again.

One of the many difficult obstacles for previously incarcerated individuals is to reintegrate into the families left behind and to find a community that consists of a circle of friends. In José's case, our entire

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family was beyond elated to have him back with us. During his five years or so of incarceration, my sisters, mother, and I (several times accompanied by me) made yearly pilgrimages to visit José in whichever prison he was assigned to¹¹. The task of familial reintegration takes time and resources. The fact that everyone in our family was a professional at the time that José was incarcerated facilitated the financial cost of visiting him and sending him money on a regular basis. In addition, my mother has always been a prodigious letter writer, and, as she was retired by the time José was in prison, she religiously sent José weekly letters and a small amount of money to help him with expenses not covered by the very stringent federal funding for prisoners. Certainly when José was released to the halfway house he was not given any clothing, toiletries, or full meals. Our family pooled their resources to provide these essentials for him. In addition we drove every weekend to see him, at least 90 miles for several of us. Once he was permitted day visits away from the halfway house and eventually weekend visits, we all took turns picking Jose up and driving him to Santa Cruz to spend time with the family.

Our extended family of friends readily adopted my brother as part of their circle of friends as well. Friends like Ronaldo Ramirez, who had helped us locate Barbara Love, the Articulation Officer, Mrinal Sinha, a graduate student in the UCSC Psychology Department, Ciel Benedetto, UCSC's Affirmative Action Officer, and Sophia Garcia, a Financial Aid Officer at UCSC, all found commonalities with my brother and befriended him and supported his efforts. No one held him suspect because he had been previously incarcerated. His entry into our extended network of friends and family also adhered to the same set of values we observed, such as being non-judgmental about José's past and enormously committed to helping him succeed, both in school and in life.

Critical Encounters: The Generosity of the Web of Caring

In helping José's transition from the halfway house to living with our family, two critical incidents are worth noting. While incarcerated, inmates are in close quarters surrounded by others literally twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, making it very difficult upon release for them to be alone. Depression is not uncommon, and social isolation is dreaded until

inmates readjust to life on the “outside.” Furthermore, total institutions like prisons do not allow individual choice—in what inmates wear, when and what they eat, when and how much they sleep, and even when to shower. Recreation or hobbies are rare, and reading (with limited access to number and variety of books) is one of the very few outlets for inmates who are literate. Television watching, although accessible, is also regulated, as are other sorts of media such as films. Consequently, a monumental adjustment once a person is released from prison is being alone and forging new friendships. My brother had several advantages—he was an avid reader (science fiction, among other genres)¹², a passionate music listener, and an excellent chess player. Upon his release from the halfway house, José lived with my sister Maria (a graduate from UCSC and a social worker by training), at the time serving as the Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation for the city of San Jose, and our grown daughter Erin, an investigator at the Santa Cruz Public Defender’s Office (also a UCSC graduate). Between the three of us, we ensured that José spent very little time alone during the first year after his release. On occasions when family members were not available, my then graduate student and now professor Mrinal Sinha (Ranu to his friends and family) would play chess with José in downtown Santa Cruz. Ranu spent hours with José, talking, joking, and generally kibitzing about their chess skills. They would also pick up chess games with others at the local coffee shops. Ronaldo Ramirez also stepped in and asked José to hangout with him; they would reminisce about growing up in Texas and share the many regional stories South Texans have in common. The importance of this transitional bridge of friendships cannot be underestimated as former inmates adjust to the hustle and bustle of regular life with no guards and wardens monitoring their every move.

As part of the reintegration process, the family decided, with José’s agreement, that we would be open about his incarceration history. We were not ashamed of what had happened, and, like so many others, if José had received the appropriate treatment for his drug addiction he would have never been incarcerated. He was one of the 60% of non-violent offenders languishing in prisons and jails because of drug offenses when treatment is what they desperately need (Schmitt, Warner & Gupta, 2010). As a consequence, everyone who knew us knew José’s history. Our agreed-upon openness allowed our extended networks to be on the lookout for

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opportunities to help José. Sophia Garcia, one of my longest friendships in Santa Cruz, offered one such opportunity. As Financial Aid Officer at UCSC she knew of an academic scholarship for re-entry students to obtain tuition and a modest stipend for school expenses. José applied and wrote the requisite essay explaining his circumstances, and Sophia was a formidable advocate on his behalf. José obtained the scholarship and it ameliorated his financial burden as he obtained one of the best undergraduate educations in the country, if not the world.

The Boat

As mentioned earlier, prisons hamper individuals from developing healthy engagements and interests. Therefore, once released from prison, it is not uncommon for many former inmates to return to their old habits of drinking and drug use. In the case of my brother, he had a deep love of the ocean. He had been a “navy man” and had traveled the world on board a guided missile cruiser. One of his favorite activities in Santa Cruz was to take long ocean walks along beautiful West Cliff Drive. Fortuitously, our friends and colleagues Dr. Heather Bullock and Dr. Julian Fernald had a sailboat that they no longer wanted to keep. When they found out in one of our family gatherings that José had a deep connection to the ocean, they offered him the sailboat as a gift. My brother was dumbfounded by their generosity. Heather and Julian reassured him that they wanted him to have it. For the next three years, sailing in the Monterey Bay became my brother’s salvation. Whenever he felt anxious, depressed, or overwhelmed by the number of changes he was undergoing, he would go sailing. He invited friends and acquaintances, including young people from BU, to experience sailing in the bay, his form of renewal. The boat became the gift that allowed him to heal spiritually by commuting with nature and feeling the generosity of spirit of two of our closest friends who gave to Jose simply because they were invested in his well being and success.



Figure 1. José in Santa Cruz with the boat gifted to him.

Media to the Rescue

José re-joined a family of extremely busy professionals. By the time he was released from prison, all of our careers were in full swing. My husband and I are professors; our three children were grown and two were about to attend law school and another one was already a professor at a prestigious university on the East Coast; my youngest sister and her partner were lawyers in the San Francisco Public Defender's Office; and my next youngest sister was a high level city administrator in San Jose, and her daughter was attending community college in San Francisco. Under these circumstances, José could have quickly become alienated within a family that, no matter how well intentioned, had very little time to spend with him on a daily basis. Our family, fortunately, lived within a relatively close geographical area in Northern California—Santa Cruz County and the cities of San Jose and San Francisco. As such, we made a commitment to spend all holidays together at our home in Santa Cruz. As the oldest sibling, I was the closest in age to José and in many ways the most familiar with his upbringing, given our childhood experiences together. My sisters are 16 years and 9 years younger than José. I also lived in the same city as José and had the most flexibility because of my senior academic appointment.

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During the first year after José left the halfway house, I became the closest I have ever been to him. However, despite these all the resources I just listed, daily interactions were not always feasible, especially when I was required to travel for professional purposes. Fortunately I came up with a solution that at first I thought would never work.

The Internet and iTunes

José has always been technically inclined and enjoys working with gadgets. During his tour of duty in the Navy, he served as a radar technician. Yet, in the five years he had been incarcerated, the world had undergone a technological revolution—cell phones, the Internet, personal computers, digital cameras, among many other developments. Most prisons, do not allow access to technology in any broad sense. In fact, during his incarceration we rarely talked by phone to my brother. We relied mostly on hand-written notes and annual visits. José was religious about sending us birthday cards, often hand-made, when he had no access to purchasing them, and long, elaborate letters. When he was released from prison on March 3, 2005, he was driven from Florence, Colorado, a rural town 110 miles from to Denver and dropped off downtown to catch the Greyhound bus for the ten-hour ride to Salinas, California, where he was admitted to the halfway house for the next four months¹³. José had to wait 12 hours in downtown Denver for the bus to California. To pass the time, he walked up and down Denver’s outdoor mall. He was startled because many people seemed to be talking to themselves as they strolled hurriedly by. At first, he thought these people were addressing him and he would begin to respond. He then realized that they were wearing earphones and were talking on their cell phones. This was only the beginning of his constant surprises he encountered heralding the technological advances that had taken place during his incarceration.

Given his ability and interest in technology, I immediately introduced my brother to email and iTunes—two technologies that literally saved his life and mine. Soon after he left the halfway house, I gave José my aging computer on which I had downloaded over a thousand songs. I knew his love of music and I recalled how he had bought a small radio while he was in prison with the money my mother had sent him. He would listen to NPR

(National Public Radio) but his favorite activity was listening to blues stations. I gave him a brief lesson on operating iTunes, showing him how to download songs, build playlists, and burn CDs. He learned quickly and iTunes became his new passion (one that he still holds dear to his heart—this past Christmas, as a stocking stuffer, we all received CDs of his favorite songs specifically tailored to each family member). I also taught him how to do Google searches on the Internet, including locating song lyrics and biographies of his favorite artists. We opened an email account for José and created a family email alias for group communication. For the next two years, I received daily emails from my brother, giving me an overview of his day, his feelings, and his dreams. I responded to all of his emails and our relationship deepened as we reconnected as siblings and as family members. The family alias allowed us to communicate each other's milestones (José's grades, my new publications, my husband's honors, and many more family achievements). José developed an email relationship with various colleagues and friends, including his professors, fellow students, and our extended family/friendship network. During his first Christmas at home, we gave him a digital camera and he became the official family photographer. Over the years, José has taken thousands of family pictures celebrating a variety of events, building an archive that has become precious to all of us. The developments in technology saved him and us by keeping us connected and informed about each other's lives.

Individual Identity: Agentic Tools for Survival and Crucial Points of Transition

Conocimiento¹⁴: Affirmation and Consciousness Raising

My two sisters and I consider ourselves feminists. Our dedication as feminists to full integration of our brother into the family included using Gloria Anzaldúa's process of *conocimiento* as a form of consciousness raising—an activity feminists engaged in during the height of the White feminist movement in the 1970s. White feminisms used CR groups, as they were called then, to help women articulate their vulnerabilities but also to provide a feedback loop to raise consciousness about possible blind spots that could contribute to their oppression. Gloria Anzaldúa (2002) developed

conocimiento as a culturally specific method situated within indigenous beliefs about the connection between the spirit and consciousness.

As noted by several scholars, prison can be one of the most racist environments systematically created by institutional policies. Prisoners are assigned living quarters based on race, and racialized groups like the Aryan Brotherhood, Black Guerilla Family, and Nuestra Familia reside in designated areas of prisons, allowing for interracial animosities to ferment, develop, and be acted upon through open displays of aggression and even murder. Furthermore, prisons are gender segregated and in high security prisons, inmates do not have intimate contact with women for years and, possibly, if serving life sentences, for their entire lives once they are imprisoned. Under these circumstances, ideologies against race difference and misogyny are not only promoted but are so deeply engrained they become naturalized. Upon leaving prison, formerly incarcerated men are required to learn a new discourse in which racialization, homophobia, and misogyny are not as freely accepted in everyday communication or banter. As feminists, my sisters and I had to confront my brother's ease with many expressions and attitudes that violated his otherwise easy-going and loving ways with everyone around him. My sisters and I had excruciating conversations among ourselves about whether we were being overly sensitive and politically demanding in criticizing his vocabulary, attitudes, and humor, or was our "calling him out" a feminist act that would ultimately raise his consciousness and make him aware that there is such thing as "words that wound" (Matsuda, Charles, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993). However, we were also concerned about sending our brother into a state of shock—un *arrebato*, in Anzaldúan terms—if we pointed out his biased behavior? Would he feel attacked? Unloved? Alone? Thrown back into a dungeon of despair, the way he felt while he was in prison? After much trepidation, we decided to hold family meetings among the four of us (the three sisters and José) and begin the process of *conocimiento*.

Anzaldúa describes *conocimiento* as a seven-stage spiral process without a start or end point, moving forward continually and non-chronologically. *Conocimiento* begins with an *arrebato*—a jolt of awareness, a crash of emotional or physical sensation—igniting the second stage of *Nepantla*—a liminal space of openness to new perspectives. The *Coatlicue* state (named for a dark Mexican goddess) designates the third stage, which

is one of turmoil that new perspectives can often provoke. Growth is not easy or neat, and one of Anzaldúa's central insights is that experiencing pain is central to the process of coming to awareness. On the other side of the pain caused by the *arrebato*, individuals often find a path for action. The awareness can lead individuals to act productively in the world. The inner work may lead to public acts: the "crafting of a new personal narrative" that integrates the new awareness.

The process of *conocimiento* also requires that the new personal narrative be in dialogue with others—a potentially dangerous process because of the risks of rejection and conflict that could revert an individual back to the *Coatlicue* state. If individuals work through this stage, they can proceed to the seventh stage, enabling them to make holistic alliances with other individuals and groups to collaborate in producing positive engagements with the world. *Conocimiento* is a continuous process; all seven stages can be reached in a matter of hours or the process can take years. *Conocimiento* can change one of any of the individual's social identities, which are part of the overall intersectional identities (race awareness, for example) and yet be completely unaware of the oppression based on gender. As individuals explore every aspect of their intersectional identities, *conocimiento* can facilitate reaching these insights that lead from awareness to public, and many times, political actions.

From the beginning, the process of *conocimiento* worked well; our family meetings were full of insights and growth. The meetings gave us an opportunity to express our concerns but also to show our love and support while José listened and he, in turn, voiced his impressions and motivations for expressing himself the way he did. As a result of almost two years of these monthly meetings, we all changed. The sisters understood the trauma and isolation José had been subjected to and the context in which denigration of others is a way of survival. I, especially, came to understand the vulnerabilities that result from a socialization into masculinities, which do not allow men to connect, talk, and explore personal issues either with men or with women. We all were enriched by the experiences of our monthly meetings, as proposed by the process of *conocimiento*.

Social Psychological Reframing: The Dance of Survival through Mestiza Consciousness¹⁵

In his memoir (Baca, 2002), Jimmy Santiago Baca discusses the years he spent in prison and his will to survive and become a writer after his release. After five years in prison, Baca anxiously awaits his release on what he believes is the designated day of completion of his sentence.

April 17, my release date, finally arrived. I had my boxes packed, and I sat in my cell the whole day waiting for someone to come and get me, but nobody did. Then, toward the end of the day, a guard came to escort me to the Parole Board room. They had finally figured it out. But when I got to the door, the warden met me. Before I could walk in, he said it was the wrong day and ordered Mad Dog Madril [a guard] to return me to my cell. Where the Parole Board usually sat, the seats were empty. The warden was fucking with me. For days I said nothing, did nothing. I went to eat and then back to my cell. I was trying to hold myself together. I got another slip to appear before the Board for the following morning. All night I tossed, eyes wide open, staring into the cavernous cell-block space and wondering if I was ever going to get out. (p. 253-254)

After repeated delays of his prison release date, in one of the most poignant moments in the memoir, Baca narrates the turning point that almost resulted in his giving up hope of ever being a free man.

I was falling deeper and deeper into melancholy. The warden has finally won, I thought; he has finally broken my spirit. I was thinking of things I wouldn't ordinarily entertain. There was a certain convict who had taken a baseball bat and beaten a Chicano over the head. I had been playing handball when I saw it happen at the far end of the field. After finishing the game with Macaron, I walked over to the convict and told him that if I didn't get out, I was coming for him. (p. 254)

In addition to considering committing violence that was unthinkable for him before, Baca was also rethinking his long-term adaptation to a warped

environment where there was little room for affection and long-term physical comfort. In his words:

About this time a beautiful boy by the name of Chiquita had come to my cell and asked if I would be her sugar daddy. I had never messed around with a guy, fearing that it might ruin the pleasure I found in being with women. But now, thinking I might never get out, I told her that if I didn't make my Board, we'd talk, and in the meantime, I'd keep her under my wing and make sure nobody raped her. I'd never talked to fags in prison. But as Chiquita began to sit at my table in the chow hall, and as I listened to her talk, for the first time in my life I realized that some men really had female spirits. When I spoke to her, I was speaking to a woman. (p. 254-255)

The continued delays and lack of information drove Baca further to his breaking point:

By the beginning of June, I was cracking up. I had lost a lot of weight and I had sleeplessness circles under my eyes. I was belligerent and surly because I was supposed to be free but was still sitting in prison. I was already beginning to think that I might have to stay indefinitely or do my sentence over. (p. 256)

Then without warning, Baca was released from prison at four in the morning in June, three months after he was supposed to be released. To those who have not been incarcerated a three-month delay may seem trivial after so many years in prison and the rewards of freedom that await the newly released. For many inmates, however, who are denied freedom in all realms of their existence, any delay feels like death—a death they experience daily by being constantly monitored and by not exerting their human agency. Because of this psychological experience of loss of control, what seems like a “trivial postponement” can result in an inmate's throwing away their accumulated “credits” and reverting or even venturing into more destructive behaviors than before. For Baca, when he nearly gave up, he prepared himself to adopt the mentality of the incarcerated, including sexual practices that were not enticing before, as a way to survive this hellish environment from which he saw no escape.

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These choques (collisions) in Anzaldúan terms, come unexpectedly; even inmates are unaware of what will trigger an *arrebato* (cataclysm). In José's case, he had been on probation for four years¹⁶. As part of the conditions for the first six months of his probation, he had mandatory monthly visits to his probation officer in San Jose, California¹⁷. I always accompanied José to the probation office and we had lunch afterwards to alleviate the stress. In addition to the monthly visits to San Jose, other probation officers came to José's home to inspect his living quarters. For the first six months, José was required to call in every night from his home phone at 8 PM. If we had a family gathering, we rushed to his home so he could make the call. When the scheduled date for the end of his probation approached, José was beyond excited. He felt his absolute freedom within reach. Like Jimmy Santiago Baca who packed his belongings and waited in his cell expectantly, José gleefully called me on the day officially marking the end of his probation. We went out for a celebratory dinner and I commemorated the occasion by taking José's first photo as a free man. However, during the evening, he learned that the end of his probation had been delayed. In my eyes the delay seemed like a minor matter, given how much progress he was making otherwise—he was thriving at the university, he had a great job at BU that he enjoyed and for which he was receiving internship credit toward his undergraduate degree, and he was fully integrated into our family. Psychologically, none of these successes prevented José from becoming depressed upon hearing that the probation was still in place. It was the first time I felt scared that he might regress and do something unpredictable. I knew from reading my husband's work on reintegration that the feelings were real and I could not talk him out of them. Yet I could not risk José possibly undoing all that he had accomplished. Fortuitously, at that time I was writing a chapter on Gloria Anzaldúa's work and her influence on my work (*Hurtado, 2011*). As I re-read her sections on *mestiza consciousness* (*Anzaldúa, 1987*), I came across the following passage:

The new *mestiza* copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. (p. 79)

in my husband's area of work) that a delay in freedom was not a simple disappointment for José. I knew he felt defeated and put back in "the cage," as he often referred to his cell in prison. I knew it was urgent that I respond to his email quickly with an alternative "reframing"—one that would come naturally to most folks that had not experienced incarceration or those who have the facultad (the gift) to trigger a mestiza consciousness that rescues one's value from defeat. It is not to say that a mestiza consciousness necessarily averts the initial anger when one's agency is blocked, but that the facultad permits a reframing to avoid sinking into the dark place of depression and reactance that can lead to destructive behavior. It is normal for individuals when confronted with failure to initially feel disappointment, followed by anger, and then, hopefully, to find a way to reframe the events in order to pull out of "their funk." Furthermore, most individuals have multiple sources of support to accomplish reframing—a partner, friends, parents, colleagues. When the failure is constant, unpredictable, and out of one's control, it can lead to a cycle of reactance that can be followed by destructive behavior. My brother was relying on me to help him recalibrate his feelings, to feel his feet on firm ground, and avoid resurfacing feelings of "failure."

I also intuitively knew that I had to reinforce the aspect of José's life that he was most proud of—reintegration into our family. Through my readings in the literature on incarceration, I had learned that, while in prison, small material possessions—a radio, writing paper, cigarettes—have great significance. These small accouterments are ways of reconstituting the self in order to feel worthy. I had promised my brother an iPhone because he loved the technology and the new features the iPhone promised—iTunes, texting, digital camera, and email—the technological features that kept my brother connected on a daily basis to all of us regardless of where we were geographically. José by no means is a materialistic person, and never has been. True to his "hippie" philosophy of life, material things come and go. He has always been more interested in the relationships that material things can facilitate, like a computer enabling communication with his family rather than the computer itself. The gift of an iPhone was simply a reminder that he would have more access to our family and that he was not alone.

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Another important aspect of our exchange is that reframing through mestiza consciousness does not simply provide a way to see the proverbial “glass half full rather than half empty” to avoid the abyss of despair; reframing is most effective when there are alternative activities or behaviors to distract the individual from thinking solely on the disappointment. In José’s case, we had worked out an arrangement where I would prepare lunch for him everyday, which he would then pick up at my house. He thoroughly enjoyed this small gesture on my part and he loved my cooking. In addition, he helped with small errands for which he earned the equivalent of a graduate assistant’s pay. He loved exploring different stores, parts of the city, and services he had never been exposed to as a result of “running errands” for our household. As a student on a limited budget, the extra cash came in handy. By shifting the content of the email message to the more enjoyable and mundane aspects of our relationship, it was easier for Jose to “snap out of it” and feel joy again. His email that followed my message convinced me that despite the longer-than-expected probation we had averted a potential setback and he had regained his psychological and emotional balance after what may appear to most people as a very minor and temporary setback.

Tying it all Together

Because of its pragmatic feminist origins in community organizing with diverse groups of women, intersectionality as conceptualized through social identity is a powerful framework. In this respect, intersectionality in action is similar to peace work among gang members in urban areas. According to Ms. Connie Rice (as quoted in [Acosta, 2007](#)), when writing about the work Barrios Unidos performs to end gang warfare, she notes:

It is important to understand that those who promote community peace, gang alternatives, and violence prevention do not usually or automatically contextualize their work as part of the ongoing struggle for civil rights. Many have come to embrace the values of the struggle, such as nonviolence, but didn’t go to a Gandhian course or study the work of César Chávez to get there. The various fronts traditionally associated with civil rights are not always the immediate driving force for community peace workers. They come to this intersection

organically from their experiences on the streets and the conditions in their communities. Typically, this occurs over time as they expand their work to address the root causes of violence. The commitment and identification of such leaders relative to civil rights comes directly from working at ground zero of the struggle. (p. 178-179)

Barrios Unidos, as well as other organizations working toward peace and against gang violence, are committed to this work because of the issues they deal with on the ground, not through exposure to courses on nonviolence or Gandhian techniques. Intersectionality in fact derives from the same source. Both anti-gang activity and the Chicana feminist development of intersectionality came from working with communities trying to find solutions to their social problems when no other methods were effective. These similar ontologies bind the anti-gang/nonviolence and Chicana feminist movements in ways that make for rich collaborations. Activists from both camps understand the value of centering lived experiences and the quotidian nature of struggles to form strong alliances and potential solutions.

Tying intersectionality to social identity theory facilitates an understanding of how micro and macro social and therapeutic interventions effect change in individual behavior. *Personal identity* can be used to understand individual outcomes (micro-processes). *Social identity* can be used to understand group outcomes (macro-processes) based on intersectional identities as assigned by ethnicity, gender, race, class, sexuality, and physical ableness. The distinction between personal and social identity precludes the treatment of social issues as rooted in individual psychologies exclusively correctable by reshaping individual behaviors and leaving structural forces (macro-processes) unexamined. In addition, this theoretical distinction validates *individual-level interventions* (for instance, participation in Alcoholic Anonymous for addiction), as well as *group-level interventions*, such as those provided by Barrios Unidos (for example, participation in group cleansing rituals at the sweat lodge).

Here, I have returned to the origins of intersectionality by providing an analysis of social interventions that may succeed in reconstructing masculinities away from patriarchal definitions. [Figure 1](#) represents the application of intersectional theory through social identity, which may aid in understanding José's successful reintegration. We began the analysis by

describing the context José had to function within: a feminist, progressive community with an ethos of redemption and rehabilitation that is systematically manifested through non-profits in the community, elected into city offices, and embodied in the faculty, staff, and students at the local university. The context of the community is reinforced in José's family structure with three strong feminist sisters at the helm of his reintegration, all of whom are committed in resources, time, friendship, and love. The larger family context is composed of individuals actively involved in the criminal justice system and dedicated to making reforms that would help individuals like José, who happen to be members of the family but also represents the larger constituencies of concern to all members of the family. This context is represented in the larger of the circles in [Figure 1](#).

Second, José had to enter a life space ([Lewin, 1948](#)) and engage in developing and fortifying social relations based on his intersectional identities—that is, working class man, previously incarcerated individual, racially mestizo, of Mexican culture and language, heterosexual, and engaged with various individuals based on these categorical memberships or social identities. Different social outlets provided different solutions. Barrios Unidos helped José as a man, who is Latino, culturally Mexican, Spanish bilingual, and working class. The women mentioned in this chapter identified as feminist and were crucial in José building relationships that helped with his transitions. These women—his sisters, UCSC staff and faculty, and BU female employees—perceived José's intersectional identities as important in understanding his previous incarceration around his non-violent offense based on a drug addiction. They understood that incarceration rates are higher among men of Color, who are working class, and grow up in poverty. Furthermore, as proposed by Chicana feminisms, José's experiences with the criminal justice system are not independent of the feminist concerns in Chicana/o communities. All of the Chicanas mentioned in José's narrative have male relatives (sometimes more than one) affected by the criminal justice system in the form of incarceration, arrest, juvenile detention, and unwarranted police harassment. To some extent, the Chicanas in this narrative felt that José was like one of the family because of their experiences with their own male family members. It is noteworthy that the Chicanas mentioned in José's narratives, although originating in working class families (many times from farmworking

backgrounds), were successful professionals now, yet the men in their lives had not escaped being touched by the criminal justice system. As such, the relationships José was developing in his new context were with individuals who understood his experiences and who were willing to undergird his commitment to reintegration after incarceration.

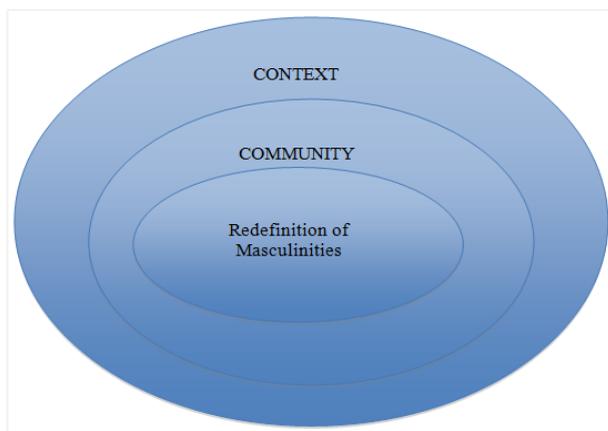


Figure 2. Different levels of Interventions

Intersectionality based on social identity theory also takes into account personal identity; that is, regardless of the context and social relationships (based on a common set of experiences and facilitated by intersecting social identities), individuals have individual will and agency. However, unlike Western theories of self in which individual will trumps social identifications and group memberships, individual identity within the intersectionality realm is relationally constituted so that individuals gain agency because of the context and relationships in which they are embedded (the *mestiza* consciousness). In José's case, the acceptance and instrumental help he received fortified him to listen to feedback on his individual behaviors because he knew he was loved unconditionally and the feedback was relationally communicated—it was not only himself but the needs of the individuals around him that he cared about. When he was asked by his sisters to be more aware of his racialized language because his

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family was multiracial, including his two nephews who are of African American and Latina ancestries, he understood immediately that it was not only a personal criticism but a relational one that affected his standing in the family. He was reassured that his individual behavior was not a matter of pass/no pass for familial belonging. In true feminist practice dedicated to social transformation and not moralistic judgments, alternative behaviors were proposed to José as another adaptation to familial belonging. José embraced many of the opportunities for personal growth through his relational networks. He became a better family member and a better counselor to youth because he was able to integrate personal feedback and become more fully integrated into his context and relationships.

The New Mestizo: Redefinition of Masculinity

An important part of José's growth was his very personal redefinition of masculinity. Like most men, José had very few venues in which to talk intimately about many of the matters discussed in this narrative. He was taught to be jovial, easy-going, and kind. Whenever he was hurt or something was troubling him, he learned to withdraw and "deal with it alone." Through the process of social and psychological reintegration, José was better able to express a wider range of emotions; for instance, many times he used email (or card writing) to express his love for his family. This email sent to me on the occasion of my birthday was not atypical:

Good morning Chatoski!

I hope that when you receive this you are well in both health and spirits...I woke up this morning feeling grateful for having you in my life...I think about it and it is probably the most important thing that has happened to me since prison...to re-integrate with you, Craig and the rest of my family would not have been possible without your forgiveness and understanding. My life as it is right now would never have happened if you did not offer me a place next to you as I was released from the cage. That being said, it goes much further than that. You have been my inspiration, my foundation, my guidance and my example. When I get into an overwhelming situation I ask myself "what would Chata do?" "What would Craig do?" Some people ask themselves what would Jesus do, I ask myself what would my sister

and brother do? Ha, it works for me! You are an amazing person; I am in awe of you and your life. You manage to be so good to all those that you love, every one whose life you touch is the better for it. I am blessed that you were born my sister. Not only do you do for us, you also have the best sense of humor of all of us, you make life fun and your wit makes me laugh, even when laughing is the last thing on my mind! Your home is a haven for me, a place that I find peace and the joy of feeling like I belong, the warmth of family that has so eluded me in the past and has sent me in tailspins of self-destruction. As I ponder my life in my bear cave over here in San Leandro, I may be alone but I know that I am not lonely, you walk this earth and I walk right next to you in spirit! To have that is one of the best things in my life! To have your affection and your cariño is to me one of the biggest blessings that I have in life...I know that I am not a perfect brother, I could have done so many things different and avoided throwing much of my life away, but that was not my fate. I am what I am, and chose what I chose, and I have put it all to rest in the past, burying my broken bones and all the pain that comes with them...But one thing I know for sure, in the now, I love you more than my words can express! It is your birthday, and I for one am celebrating that you were born my sister!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Te quiero chingos carnala!

PEPE

As the email illustrates, a central development in his redefinition of masculinity was his admiration and respect of women—feminist women at that. A respect for women’s expertise and guidance grew as José experienced the many women who helped him in his recovery. He has come to pride himself in being a man who works well with women, including those in supervisory positions at work, and he acknowledges learning from the women (many of whom are self-identified feminists) who have contributed to his recovery and reintegration after incarceration.

In 2010, José completed the Master’s program in Social Work at San Jose State. He is currently working as a social worker in Alameda County in the Bay Area. He has twenty-nine foster young people under his charge. He has become a specialist in transitioning young people from foster care to

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becoming self-sufficient, productive adults. José, in conjunction with a team of specialists, teaches young people the life skills that are ordinarily learned within families—for example, opening a bank account, applying to the local community college, planning for an educational future, and taking them off the streets and helping them find housing. José also makes court appearances and writes briefs advocating for foster youth. Not a month goes by when he fails to write an email to the family expressing his profound happiness at having such a meaningful job.

José is now in his third year as a practicing social worker. He has become known in his office as an expert on helping the foster youths who are the most difficult to reach—both young men and young women. He fights hard when these youths fail to respond to opportunities and his supervisor directs him to “dismiss” their case. A dismissal means that someone as young as 15 years old can have all resources withdrawn and let out on the street to fend for themselves. José knows to always try harder, to invent new tactics to reach these young people, and most importantly tries to see their gifts rather than their vulnerabilities. His “hippie” philosophical point of view of non-judgmental manner, nascent mestiza consciousness, and deepening respect for women (which he learned by loving and admiring his sisters) have resulted in a heightened sensitivity toward young women and men. He has convinced a young woman to forgo prostitution, found her an apartment, and successfully enrolled her in community college; he has reunited a foster adolescent with his out-of-state grandmother instead of assigning him to yet-another foster family; and, for a 15 year old who was in over 10 foster homes in one year, he placed her in a foster home near her siblings, realizing she is more likely to stay with them because they are the only family she knows. As Chicana feminists proclaim, we are not individuals only; we are relationally constituted in such a way that if our brother or sister hurts, so do we. Chicana feminists are dedicated to the goal of social justice, which includes the welfare of families and communities and all causes that create more just human arrangements (Fregoso, 2003).

Jose received the following card from the estranged mother of one of the foster youth he helped leave the streets behind.

Jose, where do I begin? What words could I possibly find that would describe my feelings? Twenty years I have been involved in the

system three reunifications for Kyli alone. Every new worker initiating the standard items, counseling, therapy, psychological evaluations, parenting classes, anger management, etc., etc.... and I have honored them all! However, in this last involvement to do what I have done over and over again almost sent me over the edge. To have my daughter missing and to be admitted 8 times to the hospital last year I was ready to die...literally. Then you came on board. Yet I thought after 20 years of dealing with social workers the to-do list was going to appear! I couldn't have done it yet you were the kindest, most attentive, problem solving oriented person I have ever met. Even after I verbally attacked you on our first phone conversation because of the Prozac that I took for work. I finally have been able to stabilize and achieve some clarity. You are my final angel, my answers to my prayers to the universe, they were heard and you were sent upon us! You are amazing and I can't tell you that there are days I cry because you believed in my daughter and have helped her to move forward. Why couldn't they have found you for us earlier? As you can see I have an amazing incredible daughter in this world. To have found her and to see the change in her was the last thing I could have imagined. You are wise beyond the master's degree you hold. You are gifted with a special empathy and objectivity not of this world. Thank you, thank you and thank you from the core of my being and God bless you on your journey. A huge hug, handshake and my deepest wishes of peace and happiness. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

The sentiments expressed in this card are for Jose, but also for every single person that helped Jose in his journey to happiness. The circle is complete.

José's story is not meant to be a "Cinderello" narrative of unbridled triumph over adversity, a Chicana/o version of *Les Miserables*, or a psychological Horatio Alger story. Now and then we are reminded that he carries a deep sorrow that his experiences in prison gave him, a perspective that the rest of the family do not have. For example, he sent the following email after my husband obtained a life verdict (instead of a death sentence) in one of his cases.

There is a man in a cell right now feeling unimaginable gratefulness for the fact that Craig Haney is alive and doing what he does...I am

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grateful too Craig, you are awesome! I am so blessed to be a part of this family!

José (October 6, 2011)

All José ever wanted (as many men in his situation do) is a shot at a family life with individuals who love and support him and, in my brother's parlance, "have his back." José strove to use his talents to help others like him and to live the mundane details of life without fear, turmoil, violence, loneliness, and isolation. He is a human being with foibles, as we all are. But instead of his shortcomings and history being used as indicative of his "criminal nature" or his inability to live productively, let alone use his amazing intellectual and social talents to be a productive member of society, that was not a possible narrative for José before his arrival in Santa Cruz and his reintegration with his family and extended network of caring family and friends. Intersectional understandings allowed everyone involved to help José become the full human being he always aspired to be.

Notes

¹ A DEA agent is a person working for the U.S. Department of Justice under the Drug Enforcement Administration, a federal agency. According to their website: "DEA Special Agents are a select group of men and women from diverse backgrounds whose experience and commitment make them the premier federal drug law enforcement agents in the world" (<http://www.justice.gov/dea/careers/agent/faqs.html#question001>).

² Pepe is short for José in Spanish; as Bill is to William in English.

³ Arcelia Hurtado, the youngest in the family, is an attorney and currently Deputy Director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, a nonprofit legal organization in San Francisco, California, dedicated "to advancing the civil and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people and their families through litigation, public policy advocacy, and public education" (www.nclrights.org/site/PageServer?pagename=about_overview). Maria Hurtado, the second youngest in the family, holds a master's in social work and is currently Assistant City Manager for the city of Tracy, California. Formerly she was a practicing social worker running two nonprofits dedicated to helping individuals with substance abuse problems. One of them, Hermanas (Sisters) Recovery Program, is a residential treatment program specializing in providing Latinas substance abuse treatment services (<http://directory.intherooms.com/Treatment-Centers/Hermanas-Recovery-Program/1866>).

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⁴ The city of Santa Cruz has a population of 58,982, with 56% white residents and 34.8% Hispanics (www.santacruzchamber.org/cwt/external/wcpages/facts/demographics.aspx).

Connie Rice obtained her undergraduate degree from Harvard University and her law degree from New York University. In 2006, prior to co-founding the Advancement Project,

⁵ See: <http://www.barriosunidos.net/about.html>

⁶ Ms. Rice was Co-Director of the Los Angeles office of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. Ms. Rice “has led multi-racial coalitions of lawyers and clients to win more than \$10 billion in damages and policy changes, through traditional class action civil rights cases redressing police misconduct, race and sex discrimination and unfair public policy in transportation, probation and public housing” (www.advancementprojectca.org/?q=node/305).

⁷ See: www.advancementprojectca.org/?q=What-we-do

⁸ See: www.advancementprojectca.org/?q=What-we-do

⁹ At the time I was a member of the BU board.

¹⁰ The community college has since been renamed Minnesota West Community College.

I AM DELETING THIS ENDNOTE SO THAT EVERYTHING THAT FOLLOWS IS CORRECTLY NUMBERED.

¹¹ José was first incarcerated in Worthington, Minnesota until his trial, which was held in Iowa. My youngest sister Arcelia and her partner Niki, both of whom at the time were public defenders in the city of San Francisco, attended José’s trial and spoke on his behalf to plead to the presiding judge to give Jose a lesser sentence. José was transferred to a prison outside Minneapolis where my mother, my husband, and I visited him. After, José was transferred to the prison in Florence, Colorado, my sisters, my niece, and I visited him every year until his release in 2005.

¹² See Jimmy Santiago Baca’s powerful prison memoir on the role of reading and writing in aiding his survival in prison and eventual rehabilitation (Baca, 2002).

¹³ The family was not allowed by prison rules to buy Jose an airline ticket to California or to accompany him on his commercial bus ride. Needless to say, we were extremely worried about his traveling alone after so many years in prison and exposure to alcohol and drugs while on his own with no support for the transition.

¹⁴ Conocimiento can be thought of as the process of “coming to a spiritual and political awareness that moves from ... inner work to public acts” of accountability, personal growth and contributions to social justice(<http://womenscrossroads.blogspot.com/2006/01/gloria-anzaldua-personal-is-political.html>).

¹⁵ The four-year probation requirements included attendance in an outpatient drug treatment program for six months, and drug testing four times a month for the first three months, then twice a month for the next three months.

¹⁶ San Jose, California is a 45-minute drive from Santa Cruz. This requirement alone would trip most former inmates who normally do not have access to a car and are required to use unreliable public transportation risking delays. When on probation, formerly incarcerated individuals are not given much leeway if they are late or miss appointments with their probation officers.

¹⁷ According to Delgado Bernal (2001) “A mestiza is literally a woman of mixed ancestry, especially of Native American, European, and African backgrounds. However, the term mestiza has come to mean a new Chicana consciousness that straddles cultures, races, languages, nations, sexualities, and spiritualities—that is, living with ambivalence while balancing opposing powers.”

¹⁸ At this time, Jose was attending San Jose State for his master’s in social work. As mentioned earlier, I usually drove from Santa Cruz to San Jose to meet him on the days he had appointments with his probation officer.

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School Alienation, Patriarchal Gender-Role Orientations and the Lower Educational Success of Boys. A Mixed-method Study

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Abstract

This paper is an empirically backed contribution to the current ‘failing boys’ debate in regard to their lower educational success. The cross-sectional analysis focuses on two possible factors behind the lower educational success of boys in secondary school: school alienation and patriarchal gender-role orientations (as an expression of the ‘hegemonic masculinity’). School deviance on the behavioural level is considered as a main mediator between these factors and educational success. Furthermore, teaching style, peer attitudes and social origin are taken into account as important factors of educational success. Analyses are based on a Swiss mixed-method study (questionnaires among 872 eighth-graders, group discussions, class room observations). Results indicate that the gender gap in educational success is caused partly by boys being more alienated from school and preferring patriarchal gender-role orientations. The impacts of these factors on educational success are mediated by school deviance. An authoritative teaching style can largely reduce school alienation.

Keywords: lower educational success, mixed methods, boys, school alienation

Alienación Escolar, Rol de Género Patriarcal y los Chicos con Bajos Niveles de Éxito Escolar. Un Estudio con Métodos Mixtos

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Resumen

Este trabajo intenta ser una contribución empírica sobre el debate actual alrededor de los malos resultados educativos de chicos. El análisis trans-sectorial se centra en dos posibles factores que explican el éxito educativo inferior de los chicos en la escuela secundaria: la alienación escolar y las orientaciones de género de carácter patriarcal (como una expresión de la "masculinidad hegemónica"). La desviación escolar en el nivel de comportamiento se considera como un mediador principal entre estos factores y el éxito educativo. Además, las metodologías educativas, las actitudes en el grupo de iguales y el origen social se tienen en cuenta como factores importantes del éxito educativo. Los análisis realizados se basan en un estudio realizado con métodos mixtos (cuestionarios a 872 estudiantes de octavo grado, grupos de discusión, observaciones en las clases). Los resultados indican que la brecha de género en el éxito educativo es causada, en parte, porque los niños están más alejados de la escuela y prefiriendo roles patriarcales de género. De modo que el impacto de estos factores en el éxito educativo están directamente relacionados con la desviación escolar. Un estilo de enseñanza autoritaria puede reducir en gran medida la alienación escolar.

Palabras clave: éxito educativo bajo, métodos mixtos, chicos, alienación escolar

The lower school success of boys has been discussed broadly in the public (cf. Tyre, 2008) and scientific sphere by employing various arguments from different epistemological perspectives (e.g. case study by Epstein et al., 1998; large-scale analysis by Helmke & Weinert, 1999; critical reflection of the underachievement discourse by Smith, 2003 or collected volume by Hadjar, 2011). The aim of the present study is to analyse the mechanisms behind the lower educational success of boys empirically by focusing on two factors: school alienation and gender-role orientations. With these foci, the paper has a strongly student-centered perspective. Students' own perceptions, rather than teachers' or parents' perspectives are studied. Although both gender-role orientations and school alienation are analysed on the individual level – as part of 'social relational contexts' (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004, p. 511) –, they are strongly linked to the cultural beliefs on the macro level (society) and the meso level (institutions).

The findings are based on a mixed-method study (questionnaires, group discussions) with school students in grade 8 at schools in the Swiss canton of Berne. Employing a triangulated design, we hope to transcend the 'Qualitative-Quantitative Divide' (Hammersley, 1992).

In Switzerland — where the gender gap to the disadvantage of boys is still rather small in comparison to other European countries (e.g. Hadjar, 2011) — 16 per cent of male and 23 per cent of female students obtained a university entrance qualification at the end of secondary school in 2008. Looking at the school tracks (leading to different degrees in stratified education systems), 59 per cent of the boys and 68 per cent of the girls attended a higher school track in grade 9, whereas the lower school track was attended by 30 per cent of boys and 26 per cent of girls (Swiss Statistical Office, 2009).

In this study, educational success is conceptualised in terms of school marks. Although school marks are linked to achievement and ability, they indicate success in school that does not equal objective achievement and is, therefore, linked to subjective assessment processes of teachers. However, for the individual student, school marks are even more important than actual ability, since school marks are relevant for a continuing educational career and the labour market. This applies especially to school marks in grade 8 in the Swiss canton of Berne, because these are crucial when it

comes to the question of leaving school after 9 years of schooling, or attending an upper secondary school.

As already outlined, this study focuses on two factors of school success: school alienation and traditional gender-role orientations – both assumed to be expressed in problem behaviour in school. School alienation is understood as a low attachment to school, low school commitment, low identification with school and learning and an emotional detachment from academic goals and values (Finn, 1989). Beside social origin and peer influences, teaching style is a major determinant of school alienation. Thus, an authoritative teaching style is another major issue analysed. Such an authoritative teaching style is characterised by providing structures, (positive) control and caring, and should not be mixed up with an authoritarian style. Gender-role orientations – also labelled as gender ideology, gender-related attitudes – are orientations that structure attitudes, aims, motivations and, finally, behaviour, and are therefore relevant for educational success. They are defined as individual beliefs about normal roles of men and women (Harris & Firestone, 1998) mirroring gender relations in family life and at the workplace (Brogan & Kunter, 1976; Coltrane, 1998). Even while intergenerational transmission of gender ideology plays a crucial role, gender-role orientations are responsive to life changes on the individual level (e.g. life course analysis by Vespa, 2009; qualitative interview study by Damaske, 2011) and vary across place and time on the societal level (e.g. significant increase in profeminist views according to cohort analysis by Mason & Lu, 1988; review of longitudinal research by Davis & Greenstein, 2009). Patriarchal gender-roles – as one possible manifestation of gender ideology – express compliance with traditional expectations in regard to the role of men and women in society and in particular at the workplace and in the family (Livingston & Judge, 2008). They consist of both the ideas of gender essentialism (difference) – since women and men are assumed to be naturally different – and male domination (inequality), since a superior role is ascribed to men (Ridgeway et al., 1998). Such patriarchal gender-role orientations represent some core aspects of the concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’, namely the definition of masculinity in contradiction to femininity, the maintenance of men’s domination over women and the discrediting of women and ‘the female’ (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Social institutions (such as family,

school, peers, church and media) play a crucial role in the reproduction of culturally specific gender-roles (Davis & Greenstein, 2009; Pérez-Jiménez et al., 2007; Swain, 2005).

The paper is structured as follows: A brief reminder of the most prominent explanations of the lower educational success of boys will be followed by a theoretical exploration of the selected factors. Then the study design will be introduced followed by the results section: In the quantitative part, first descriptive results on gender differences in educational success and explanatory factors are presented, before giving a detailed insight into multivariate analyses. In the qualitative part, interpretations from the group discussions and classroom observations will follow. Finally, the main results will be triangulated and discussed.

Literature Review

Some Aspects of the Failing Boys Debate

The scientific ‘failing boys’ debate¹ focuses on school students and their characteristics, as well as on family background, teachers and school.

At the student level, a change in the educational aspirations of girls can be stated which is strongly linked to the increased labour market chances of women and better opportunities to use their educational investments in the process of status attainment (cf. longitudinal analysis by Breen et al., 2010). However, there are also gender differences in behavioural patterns that are relevant to educational success. A German large-scale project diagnosed boys as suffering from a so called ‘lazybones syndrome’ (Helmke & Weinert, 1999): boys frequently make less effort and have less of a sense of duty than girls, are also less compliant in their behaviour and exhibit more deviant behaviour at school. This, on the one hand, may divert boys from successful learning and, on the other hand, may be sanctioned by teachers, resulting in a lack of success at school.

Some research has also focused on the influence of leisure-time behaviours like media consumption. Based on a panel study, it was shown that boys spend more time than girls on the computer, playing games and watching films that are not appropriate for their age (Mössle et al., 2010). This may draw some of their attention away from learning, as well as

diverting some of their cognitive abilities that they need for school-related activities.

Another line of explanation is presented in intersectional studies on gender and ethnicity that focuses on a variety of interactions between women and men of different migrant groups concerning educational achievements and gender ideology constructions (Morris, 2012; Damaske, 2011; Vespa, 2009; Cokley & Moore, 2007; Kimmel, Hearn & Connell, 2005).

Moving the focus from students to teachers, female teachers have been at the centre of the debate regarding boys who fail at school from the beginning. From this point of view (cf. analysis of public statistics in Germany by Diefenbach & Klein, 2002), the feminisation of the profession of the (primary) school teacher has led to a feminine school culture – due to different socialisation experiences of female teachers and boys – that may result in a lack of understanding and conscious or unconscious discrimination. However, recent studies from different epistemological perspectives do not support this idea (comparative study by Neugebauer, Helbig & Landmann, 2011; feminist analysis by Francis & Skelton, 2010). On the other hand, it may be useful to consider the stereotypes of both male and female teachers regarding boys which may serve as ‘anchors’ for evaluations of students’ performances (‘anchor effects’, Strack & Mussweiler, 1997).

All in all, the underachievement of boys appears to be a controversial issue. While some studies stress the boys’ increasing disadvantage (Diefenbach & Klein, 2002; Tyre, 2006), others conclude that the gender gap is overrated and overgeneralised (Francis & Skelton, 2010; Morris, 2008) and needs to be considered more differentiated.

Gender-Role Orientations, School Alienation and Educational Success

Not all, but some boys are failing in school. Thus, we focus on gender-role orientations and school alienation as two specific causes of the lower educational success of boys – the first being more prominently discussed than the latter. Our first argument is that probability of failure rises with *patriarchal gender-role orientations* which boys are more likely to believe in than girls – as shown in a longitudinal study by Ittel, Kuhl and Hess

(2006). Mendez and Crawford (2002) also found that girls adhere more strongly to liberal attitudes toward the rights of women in society and that gifted girls are equipped with more gender-role flexibility. This phenomenon is also quantitatively analysed by Massad (1981) demonstrating that the experienced pressure to stick to sex role stereotypes differs between girls and boys. Whereas for boys a link between masculinity and peer-acceptance was found, girls benefit from a balance between masculinity and femininity in order to strengthen peer-acceptance. Similar patterns are found in Iverson and Murphys' (2003) study on gender identity construction within classrooms: a high gender-role pressure on boys and potential costs to a boys' reputation if he is violating non-egalitarian accounts of masculinity. Thus, informal pupil culture and peer expectations play an important role while 'learning to be a schoolboy' (Swain, 2005, p. 218). However, even contemporary school – including teachers – can participate in the construction of hegemonic masculinity as Pascoe (2007) shows in her ethnographic study. According to research using the Gender Role Conflict (GRC) scale, rigid, sexist, or restrictive gender roles result in cognitive, affective, unconscious, or behavioral problems (O'Neil, 2008). Cornelissen et al. (2002) parallel the idea that boys who inherit traditional gender-role orientations, and who devalue gender-neutral or female attitudes and behaviours, have problems at school. The traditional image of male identity — critically reviewed and specified by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) as 'hegemonic masculinity' — which includes dominant, go-getter or even deviant roles, is incompatible with contemporary schools (cf. Swain, 2005). Non-egalitarian boys cannot gain approval from their peer group by being good at school, but must instead express a dislike of school. From the perspective of traditional (non-egalitarian) masculinity, characteristics such as conformity and cooperation, are devaluated as 'female', and so is educational success in some socialisation environments, demonstrated within an in-depth exploration (Frosh, Phoenix & Pattman, 2002). In particular, academic elements in school – e.g. knowledge gained from books ('booksmarts', Morris, 2008, p. 740) – are seen as *female*, whereas practical elements (e.g. sports) are seen as *male*. In the British discourse on failing boys, traditional gender-role patterns are addressed as 'laddish' attitudes (Skelton & Francis, 2011) that are anti-academic: hard work and school achievement are devalued. Some

ethnographic oriented scholars (Willis, 1977; Martino, 1999) highlight that this ‘laddish’ construction of masculinity implies a devaluation of schoolwork, diligence and application as feminine; especially in the age between 11 and 16 (Swain, 2005) and among working-class boys. However, there are also other masculinities – e.g. Skelton and Francis (2011) analysed successfully literate boys and coined the term ‘renaissance masculinity’ describing (mostly middle-class) boys who are socially popular and able to incorporate *feminine* attributes that help them to succeed in a neoliberal society.

All in all, boys seem to adhere more strongly to these patriarchal gender-role orientation or ‘hegemonic masculinity’ and show more often anti-school behaviour. This is an *ironic outcome* (Morris, 2008, p. 731) or paradox, since boys who prefer patriarchal life styles should be much more interested in investing in education, according to interest-based explanations and human capital theory (Becker, 1964), since they should anticipate their role as the male breadwinner later in life.

Vice versa, employing a motivational explanation, it can be assumed that girls with patriarchal gender-role orientations perform worse than girls with modern egalitarian views since the former anticipate their roles as mothers and housewives with marginal interest in labour force participation. Therefore, it is not rational for them to invest in education (rational choice theories; Breen et al., 2010). Using survey data, Davis and Pearce (2007) have shown that the existing relationship between egalitarian gender views and college education is stronger for girls. These considerations lead us to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: Boys have more patriarchal gender-role orientations than girls.

Hypothesis 1b: The higher boys and girls prefer patriarchal gender-role orientations, the lower their educational success.

School alienation is characterised by a low attachment to school, low school commitment, a low identification with school and learning and an emotional detachment from academic goals and values (Finn, 1989; Hascher & Hagenauer, 2010). In particular in regard to emotional detachment, it resembles the opposite of what Fredericks et al. (2004) call ‘emotional engagement’. In this study, school alienation is conceptualised in the sense of motivational and interest theories. A lack of interest in

school and a lack of intrinsic learning and achievement motivation — referring to a low interest in subjects and tasks and a lack of learning enjoyment — reduce educational success as the meta-analysis of Cameron and Pierce (1994) has shown.

Several cross-sectional surveys revealed that boys are more alienated from school than girls (Trusty & Dooley-Dickey, 1993; Hascher & Hagenauer, 2010). According to the Stage-Environment-Fit Theory (Eccles & Midgley, 1989), this gender difference may be caused by the mechanism that girls' needs – as objects of socialisation – seem to be better fulfilled by the school; and that they can adapt much better to the expectations of the school. Referring to Cohen's theory of subculture (1955), it can be argued that school alienation is a kind of reaction of boys whose needs are not fulfilled at school. According to Willis' (1977) ethnographic research, school alienation is an expression of resistance to school, particularly an opposition of working-class boys to school, its authoritative structures and its middle-class culture.

A main consequence of school alienation on the behavioural level is a lack of participation in learning activities and a lack of conformity to school rules, that eventually leads to lower school success and might even result in school dropout as analysed by Vallerand, Fortier and Guay (1997). The increasing emotional and physical distance from school and the decreasing identification can also mean a lack of resources to cope with experiences of failing in school for individual students (Hascher & Hagenauer, 2010). After all, the following hypotheses appear to be plausible:

Hypothesis 2a: Boys are more alienated from school than girls.

Hypothesis 2b: The greater the school alienation among girls and boys, the lower the educational success.

A potential link between patriarchal gender-role orientations, school alienation and educational success is *school deviance*; the violation of school norms. A general conceptual framework to theorise the mediating function of school deviance is provided by framing models. Considering the framing model of Social Action Theory (Wikström & Sampson, 2006), the following mechanisms can be described: If patriarchal gender-role orientations are employed as frames for the selection of an action alternative, action alternatives of boys are reduced to typical male behavioural patterns that might be interpreted as school delinquency, which

might lead to a decrease in educational success, since as *female* perceived behavioural patterns are no longer taken into account or actively dismissed. Morris (2008) emphasised – conducting participant observations and an interview study – that boys and girls actively use different (educational) behaviours in their performance of gender. The same can be assumed for school alienation. School alienation also functions as such a frame: If people are alienated from school, they do not consider action alternatives that resemble the image of a ‘good pupil’, but alternatives that are linked to active opposition to this image.

The school is an institution that normalises student behaviour, but at the same time the school institution and its structure provide reasons for school deviance (Holtappels & Meier, 2000). Students use deviant behavioural patterns to express resistance to school, to compensate for failures or even to meet the school’s expectations (e.g. cheating to pass a test). Therefore, school deviance ranges from cheating, school absenteeism and exam copying to violence against things or people. Stoudt (2006, p. 275) links the context of schools and the ‘hegemonic masculine curriculum’ to the reinforcement of gender-roles and the peer violence.

Gender differences in deviant behaviour are a common finding of cross-cultural quantitative studies – with girls usually showing less delinquency, less drug use, less xenophobia, and less violent behaviour than boys (Junger-Tas, Ribeaud & Cruyff, 2004). In contrast to socio-biologist explanations, this gender gap may be rooted in gender-specific socialisation (e.g. classical approach by Oakley, 1972). Following the Power-Control Theory of Gender and Delinquency (Hadjar et al., 2007), a large difference between mothers and fathers in labour force participation goes along with differences in parental styles (control behaviour) towards male and female children, and a transmission of certain values, namely non-egalitarian gender-role orientations. This leads to more risk-taking behaviour among boys and eventually to higher school deviance. Findings from experimental psychology indicate that the gender gap in favour of boys is low regarding cheating and school absenteeism, but larger when offensive behaviour, such as disturbances during lessons and violence, is taken into account (Eagly & Chivala, 1986; Eagly & Wood, 1999). Boys also respond more often to failing experiences by aggressive and violent behaviour (Hannover, 2004). Other so-called *hegemonic practices of masculinity* that potentially hinder

educational progress include rebellious attitudes towards schoolwork, challenging rules and authority and physical toughness (Morris, 2008).

School deviance is associated with lower educational success, since such disruptive and distracting behaviours may consume resources that are needed for learning activities and may influence the assessments by the teachers as shown in a quantitative-qualitative case study (Nagy, 2011).

This leads us to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3a: Boys more often show school deviance.

Hypothesis 3b: Greater school deviance leads to lower educational success.

With regard to the link between gender-role orientations respectively school alienation and problem behaviour in school, another two hypotheses are derived from the previous explorations:

Hypothesis 4: The more students prefer patriarchal gender-role orientations, the higher their school deviance.

Hypothesis 5: The more students are alienated from school, the higher their school deviance.

Teaching Style, Peer attitudes and Social Origin

Educational success and its factors also depend on other socialisation agents like family, peers and teachers. Teachers function not only as instructors, but also as social resources, since they are able to motivate, provide support for learning activities, and are able to raise the subjective wellbeing of boys and girls at school. From this point of view, the teacher may be seen as social capital in the sense of Coleman (1988). This supporting and motivating notion of teachers is reflected in an authoritative *teaching style* characterised by a high level of social control, but also a high level of emotional commitment and acceptance by the educator providing a good learning setting. Empirical results show that students benefit from an authoritative teaching style by gaining better achievements and being better integrated into the school, which improves their level of classroom adjustment and reduces the risk of school failure (Dever & Karabenick, 2011). Surveys of students and teachers in at-risk schools back this correlation (Baker et al., 2009). Hallinan (2008) also found in her study on

school attachment that students who perceive their teachers as caring and respecting think more positively about school.

Following this reasoning, we derive a sixth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 6: The more authoritative the style of the teachers; the lower the school alienation and the higher the educational success of the students.

As described above, peer acceptance plays an important role in adolescents' life. The characteristics of the peer group constitute a crucial factor according to Coleman's well-known 'Equality of Educational Opportunity' report (1966). The popularity aspect often results in the aim of being perceived as *normal* or *alike the others* within the informal peer culture in order to be protected from teasing (Swain, 2005). Thus, school-related attitudes and behaviour of *peer groups* can be defined as a source of motivation which does not always goes along with engaging in school, depending on whether the norms and values of teachers and students match (Murdock, 1999; Hadjar & Lupatsch, 2010). Large-scale analyses confirm the interplay between peers and individual achievement. School alienated peers and peers who engage in behaviour like smoking and drinking negatively influence school marks (Finn, 1989; Breakwell & Robertson, 2001). Legewie and DiPrete (2012) argue, based on their quasi-experimental research, that academically-oriented peer environments shape the construction of masculinity into less negative attitudes towards school and higher commitment with academia.

Since adolescents often seek friends who are similar to themselves (Murdock, 1999) boys are supposed to be more often surrounded by school alienated friends than girls. This leads us to our final hypotheses:

Hypothesis 7a: Boys more often report on school alienated peers than girls.

Hypothesis 7b: The more school alienated a student perceives his/her peers, the higher the students' own school alienation.

To avoid fallacies, it is important to control for *social origin*. For instance, a link between patriarchal gender-role orientation and educational success could be only an effect of social origin; working-class students prefer rather patriarchal gender-role orientations and at the same time have a lower educational success as shown by Morris (2012) on masculinity and class- and race-disadvantaged boys or Davis and Greenstein (2009) on the association between higher educational level and gender egalitarianism.

Thus, controlling for social origin helps to elaborate the genuine effect of gender-role orientations. A stable and robust finding of international large-scale research is a persistent link of parents' occupational status or educational level on educational attainment of their offspring (Blossfeld & Shavit, 1993; Becker, 2003), although there has been a slight decrease in educational inequalities during the educational expansion (Breen et al., 2010). With regard to the mechanisms behind these inequalities, primary effects (resource differences and achievements) and secondary effects (cost-benefit calculations) of social origin (Boudon, 1974) are effective: Compared to other social classes, working-class families have a lack of resources and often perceive a lower value of educational investment, but a higher investment risk (failure of their children; cf. Becker, 2003).

Methods

The analysis of gender difference in educational success is part of the research project 'Lazy boys, ambitious girls?' (2008–2011); a cooperation between the Berne School of Teacher Education (Elisabeth Grünewald-Huber) and the University of Berne (Andreas Hadjar). A multi-method design has been employed including a questionnaire survey, video observations of German and Mathematics lessons, and group discussions with gender-homogeneous groups of students. The questionnaire is an effective way to survey anonymously students' self-reported attitudes and behaviour. To allow for actor-oriented interpretations beyond the standardised response options and for students' own concepts and 'explanations-in-use' (Willis, 1977, p. 62), group discussions were conducted. Finally, video observations enable to analyse actual behaviour within classroom settings. The great potential of this 'sequential quantitative-qualitative design' is the identification of statistical relationships, which then are deepened.

Questionnaire Survey

The analysis is based on a quantitative student dataset. The cluster sample encompasses 19 randomly-selected schools (stratified random sample) in the canton of Berne (Switzerland) where 8 graders are taught. The net

sample encompasses 872 students (49 school classes). Students were told that the aim of this study is to increase teaching and school quality. The gender aspect was not mentioned to avoid reification.

The educational system in the Swiss canton of Berne is stratified to an intermediate extent. From grade 7, students are categorised into three school tracks: 'Real' (lower achievement level), 'Sek' (intermediate achievement level) and 'Spezsek' (upper achievement level), also varying by future educational and occupational possibilities. Whereas the upper school track is a kind of preparation for an upper secondary school career, students at 'Sek' level have a certain chance to progress to the upper secondary school, but often start vocational training or attend a one-year bridging education after grade 9.²

With regard to track attendance, our sample fits the actual distribution of school students in the canton of Berne (34.5 per cent in 'Real', 49.9 per cent in 'Sek' and 15.6 per cent in 'Spezsek'). The number of female students (51.1 per cent) equals about the number of male students (48.9 per cent). The average age of the interviewed students is 14.9 years.

The theoretical concepts are operationalised employing the following measurements: *Educational success* as an independent variable is a mean index of seven school marks that range from 6 to 1 in the Swiss system, with 6 as the best mark. Subjects included are German, French and Mathematics (the most important subjects for the tracking) and English, Nature (Biology), Culture (History) and Music. The school marks were gathered from official teacher files. An anonymous coding system was employed to link school marks and questionnaires.

Patriarchal gender-role orientations were measured by seven items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$) from a scale introduced by Brogan and Kunter (1976) and modified by Athenstaedt (2000). A patriarchal gender-role orientation is characterised by the acceptance of power differences, a positive attitude towards gender differences in familial authority and employment opportunities, and by a clear stereotype of what is male and what is female. Sample items are: 'It is more important for a woman to support her husband in his career than to pursue a career of her own', and 'In a group of men and women, only a man should work in the leadership role'. This scale ranged from 1 (egalitarian orientation) to 5 (patriarchal orientation).

School alienation is conceptualised as a second order construct that comprises three dimensions (Cronbach's $\alpha = .66$): negative attitude towards school (factor loading: .704); lack of task orientation (.796); and lack of intrinsic motivation (.830). The three first-order-factors have been measured as follows;

Negative attitude towards school is a three-item scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .59$) that covers aspects such as: 'school has been a waste of time'.

Task orientation is part of the more complex concept of (academic) goal orientation by Nicholls (1984), and attempts to indicate if students work in a concentrated manner and successfully to fulfil tasks. The six-item scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .73$) has been recoded to become part of the school alienation construct (sample item: 'I am satisfied with school when something I learned makes me want to know more about it').

Intrinsic motivation is a two-item factor (Cronbach's $\alpha = .73$) based on the Children's Academic Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (CAIMI; Gottfried 1985): sample item: 'I learn, because I enjoy learning'.

The instrument used to measure *school deviance* is partly based on work by Crick and Grotpeter (1995). The six-item scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$) represents different kinds of aggression against teachers, classmates and things. Sample items include: 'How often do you annoy your teachers intentionally?' or 'How often do you fight with others?'

The factor *authoritative teaching* comprises five items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$) that have been used in the PISA studies (Kunter et al., 2002). This measurement of teaching styles focuses on potential resources (in contrast to the issue of whether these resources are used or need to be used). Sample item: 'If I need extra help, I will receive it from my teachers'.

Peer attitudes towards school were assessed by the surveyed students themselves. Following the Thomas theorem the interpretation of a situation matters, not the real situation itself. Thus, the perception of the own friends' attitude towards educational efforts are assumed to be more influential than actual behaviour. Peer attitudes are measured by four questions (cf. Hadjar & Baier, 2004) indicating positive views like 'My friends appreciate learning for school' (Cronbach's $\alpha = .77$).

The highest *educational level of the parents* is introduced as a control for social origin, since it is strongly linked to social status. The educational level of the parent with the higher educational qualification – stated by the

children – was transformed into years of education (classification of Swiss educational qualifications).

Group Discussions and Video Observations

The gender homogeneous *group discussions* served the gathering of collective patterns of perception and orientation (Bohnsack, Pfaff & Weller, 2009) and enable to work out collective biographical experiences such as school climate, attitudes of school alienation or gender-role orientations. Those orientations are supposed to emerge in interactions in school, where they are constantly renewed and maintained. Twelve group discussions (with 4 to 13 participants per group) were carried out – selected via *theoretical sampling* by applying the criteria of ‘achievement level’ and gender-role orientations (extreme cases) on the base of the quantitative results. Whereas the first (unstructured and open) part of each discussion was introduced by the question why students feel/or not feel good at school, during the second part a specially-designed interview guideline ensured that all relevant topics were addressed. *Video observation* was used in order to analyse student behaviour during lessons. A category system was developed which facilitated the identification of observations as ‘behaviour ascribed to the own sex’ (doing gender) versus ‘behaviour ascribed to the opposite sex’ (undoing gender). Example categories are ‘being ambitious’ or ‘challenging teachers’.

Qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000) was used in order to analyse the transcribed data. Thus, data were summarised, segmented and patterned by a category system which was theory-driven, but also steadily enhanced according to the empirical material (coding with MAXQDA).

Quantitative Results on the Gender Gap in Educational Success

First, the gender differences in school marks will be assessed. Then mean differences between boys and girls in the theorised explanatory factors will be looked at. Finally a structural equation model makes visible direct and indirect mechanisms behind the gender variations in educational success.

In [Figure 1](#), subject-specific mean differences between girls’ and boys’ school marks are shown. The boys’ mean score has been subtracted from

the girls’ mean score: scores above 0 refer to a girls’ lead over boys. Girls score significantly better in German, French, English and Music. This applies to all school tracks. There are no gender differences in favour of boys. Summing up, there is a clear gender gap in school marks: girls outperform boys.

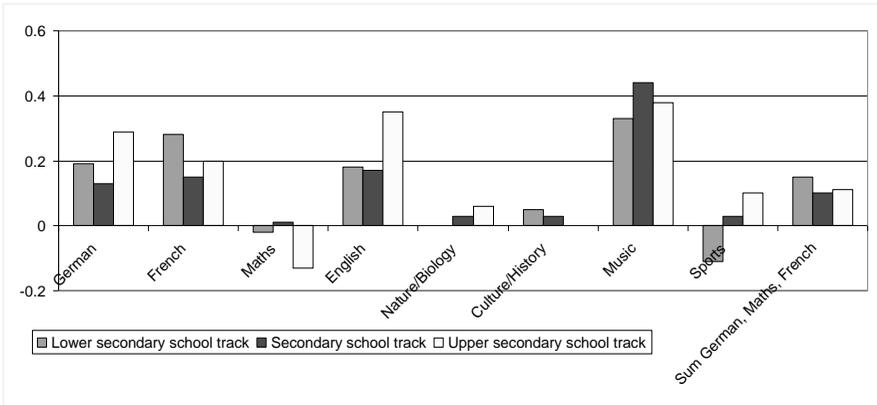


Figure 1. Gender differences in educational success (grade point average) in favour of girls
 significant $p \leq .05$

Data Source: Canton of Berne, Switzerland, School Student Sample 2009

A first impression of possible causes of the gender gap in educational success can be derived from a comparison of male and female students regarding the descriptives of some explanatory factors (table 1). As expected, there are significant gender differences in student characteristics: boys prefer, in line with hypothesis 1a, more traditional gender-role orientations than girls. Hypothesis 2a is also backed: boys are more alienated from school than girls. School deviance at the behavioural level is also higher among boys, as assumed in hypothesis 3a. Regarding peer attitudes towards school, the data are consistent with hypothesis 7a: boys perceive their peers’ attitudes towards school as less positive than girls do. Finally, looking at authoritative teaching styles, results indicate that there is no significant difference in the perception of the support by teachers.

Table 1

Gender difference in educational success and explanatory variables

Variable (min-max)	Mean Girls (standard deviation)	Mean Boys (standard deviation)	Mean Difference (Significance)
Educational Success (mean school marks) (1-6)	4.75 (0.40)	4.60 (0.41)	*
Patriarchal Gender- Role Orientations (1-5)	2.18 (0.78)	2.92 (0.83)	*
School Alienation (1-5)	2.45 (0.61)	2.59 (0.56)	*
School Deviance (1-5)	1.58 (0.52)	2.01 (0.73)	*
Teachers: Authoritative Style (1-5)	3.86 (0.65)	3.85 (0.70)	
Peer Attitudes towards School (positive attitudes) (1-5)	3.33 (0.68)	3.04 (0.72)	*

* significance level $p \leq .05$

Data Source: Canton of Berne, Switzerland, School Student Sample 2009;
School Class Level n = 49; School Student Level n= 758

To explain gender differences in educational success, direct and indirect effects as well as interdependencies between the explanatory variables will be analysed by estimating gender-specific structural equation models (SEM, maximum-likelihood estimation) using AMOS. Owing to the complexity of the model, all scales were introduced as manifest variables into the SEM to optimise the ratio of number of cases (N) to the number of

variables. Goodness-of-fit measures show a good fit of the data to the hypothesised, slightly modified, conceptual model (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

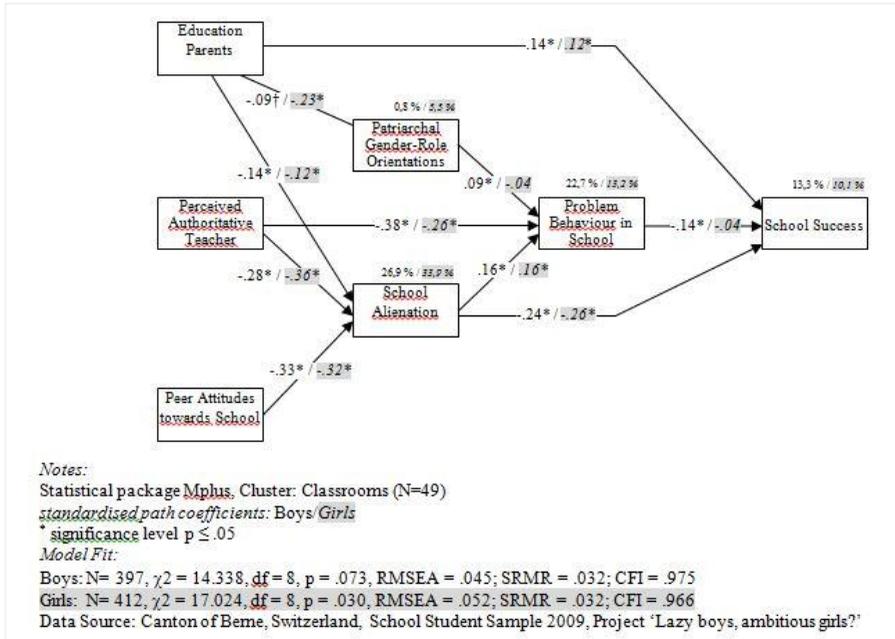


Figure 2: Structural equation models: Gender-specific explanation of educational success

Figure 2 shows that the included explanatory variables explain 13 per cent (male students) and 10 per cent (female students) of the variance in educational success. The main explanatory factor of educational success is school alienation which is associated negatively with educational success among both male and female students, as expected in hypothesis 2b. Patriarchal gender-role orientations do not have a direct impact on educational success as postulated in hypothesis 1b. But among boys, patriarchal gender-role orientations significantly increase school deviance, so that hypothesis 4 is only supported for the male subgroup. What applies also only to boys is that school deviance is another predictor of educational

success, in line with hypothesis 3b. Furthermore school deviance depends on school alienation: greater school alienation is associated with greater school deviance (as assumed in hypothesis 5). As becomes clear from [figure 2](#), the teacher is able to reduce school alienation and school deviance by employing an authoritative style. Thus, in addition to the teaching-school-alienation link postulated in hypothesis 6, authoritative teaching also reduces school deviance directly. A direct link to school success is not indicated. Among boys and girls, a very high influence of peer attitudes on school alienation concurs with hypothesis 7b. But there appears no other correlation, neither between peer attitudes and school deviance nor directly between peer attitudes and school success.

The control variable social origin has a profound impact on school alienation that is higher in families with a lower educational level. Patriarchal gender-role orientations are influenced by social origin among girls; among boys this holds only on the 10 per cent threshold. Furthermore there is still a genuine direct effect of social origin on educational success among boys and girls.

Qualitative Results on the Role of Gender-Role Orientations and School Alienation

Results of the qualitative sub-studies contribute to a more holistic picture. It is focused on gender-role orientations first and then findings related to school alienation are presented.

The group discussions with the eighth-graders reveal different views on gender relations and gender-role orientations that differ by school track (achievement level). As outlined in the method section, gender-homogeneous groups of students had been asked about their conceptions of committed relationships in adult life. In the low educational track (low achievement level), male students often referred to traditional role models including a ‘male bread-winner’ and an ‘around-the-clock mother’. As reasons behind these ideas, a male student attending a low educational track mentioned: ‘Women are more patient with small children and teenagers. Men do have [...] less patience and work during the day and come back in the evening’. The majority of female students in low educational tracks also favour traditional gender-role patterns, but seem to have a wider scope of

life scripts. Their statements ranged from rather traditional – ‘My husband will work maybe 80 per cent [work load], I will work only one day [a week]. When he has time, he will also care for the children so that they see him [as well]’ and ‘The household is mainly dealt with by the women’ – to more modern views like ‘However, I do not want children and also do not want to marry necessarily. Most important is the job’. The group discussions with male students of the higher educational tracks (high achievement level) were characterised by a high degree of political correctness. Students are aware that their future spouses may belong to a modern generation of women who is not willing to abstain from an educational and professional career: ‘When we will be adults, the majority of women will want to work and say “Monsieur, you have to prepare the food!”’ The anticipated workforce participation is rather egalitarian, most of these male students want to share in the care for the children favouring a double part-time model. The female students of the higher educational track also expressed their strong orientation towards labour-market participation as well as towards family: ‘For me it is very important to never depend on a men. [...] You need a high education to stand on your own feet’.

Regarding educational success and school alienation, male students often stressed that female students would have a more facilitated access to learning and school in general, were more motivated and less distracted from learning activities. Male students from the high educational track stated that women were able to learn more easily than men and have more ambition, since men were more often engaged in gaming, cars and technical stuff. Whereas women were more able to concentrate on learning activities and have more stamina, men would be more often distracted. Both female and male students refer to a minimalistic approach of the boys and their higher degree of effort avoidance: ‘We often do the minimum of what we have to do’ stated a male student.

The video observation mainly revealed behavioural differences between male and female students. Boys more often tend to avoid efforts or at least try to express effort avoidance. They more often orient themselves toward minimum standards. An illustrative example is a scene from a lesson in the low educational track: The teacher announces a test for the next day. A girl expresses that the students would need to prepare this exam. A male student speaks out ‘For this test you do not need to study’. Coolness, non-conform

or deviant behaviour – being linked to a lower school success – is also more often to be found among boys. Counting the (few) incidents in the videographed lessons, boys more often resist orders of the teachers, copy from class-mates or state to have forgotten learning material.

There is one observation that might add to the understanding to the peer behaviour of some boys. While all students in a low level school class were filling out questionnaires, two male students showed disruptive behaviour (making noise, violating their desks). The students who finished their questionnaires were asked to take a break outside. Interestingly, the two boys stopped their annoying behaviour after the last male student had left the room – with only some girls still dealing with their questionnaires. This supports the notion that such deviant behaviours are addressed towards the other boys as a ‘situated construction’ of gender (Morris, 2008).

Conclusions and Discussion

Both parts of this study have shown that student characteristics play a crucial role regarding the gender gap in educational success in favour of girls. School alienation appears to be the main predictor of educational success, and owing to the higher alienation level among boys, also the major cause of the gender gap. Also in the group discussions, a higher distance to schooling was more often attributed to boys in the perceptions of both sex groups. Another issue are patriarchal gender-role orientations: the male student groups reported a higher preference for traditional gender-role orientations than girls. In particular this was true for low achievers. The same pattern is revealed by the statistical analyses: Boys score higher in traditional gender-role views. Regarding the consequences a higher preference for such orientations is associated with more problem behaviour in school only for boys. This school deviance can be seen as a behavioural mediator between patriarchal gender-role orientations and educational success. Boys with a higher preference for patriarchal gender-role orientations behave more deviantly in school, and therefore have lower educational success. This finding was consistent with the classroom observations. Furthermore, the direct link between school alienation and school success is not surprising, since a low attachment to school can find expression in lower school marks without an indication on the behavioural

level. The finding, that the effect of school alienation on school deviance is as strong for boys as for girls, but problem behaviour in school only effects boys' school success, suggests the existence of different forms of deviance in schools and different perceptions of girls and boys behaviour from teachers' perspectives. Based on the SEM, a closer look at the explaining factors of school alienation is possible: a) teacher behaviour can reduce school alienation by employing an authoritative style (balancing the provision of structure and caring); b) peer attitudes influence school alienation of boys and girls to the same degree, whereas within the observational study situations emerged which demonstrated how particularly male students use the classroom setting in order to act *laddish*, especially in the presence of other boys; c) social origin has an important role in this framework: It has a direct impact on educational success for girls and boys, and children originating from families with a lower educational background show greater school alienation and higher preference of patriarchal gender-role orientations. This finding came also to light in the group discussions, which were clustered according to achievement level due to the stratified educational system. The group discussions provide a detailed picture regarding gender-role orientations: Low achieving girls adhere to rather traditional gender-role orientations, but with a broader range of configuration than working class boys, above described as gender-role flexibility.

Interestingly, there is no link between patriarchal gender-role orientations and school alienation, although such a link is implied in several theoretical explorations regarding the devaluation of school as female by boys (e.g. [Martino, 1999](#)). Maybe preferring patriarchal gender-role orientations does not mean being alienated automatically from school, but 'laddish behaviour' has the unintended consequence of reduced educational success. Therefore, behavioural level is more important in this argument than school alienation on the attitudinal level.

Beside the consistent results from the qualitative and quantitative parts of this study, each method gave added value. The SEM revealed direct and indirect effects of patriarchal gender-role orientations and school alienation – differentiated for girls and boys. In the context of attitudes towards and deviant behaviour in school, a questionnaire may provide answers which are less biased by social desirability. Additionally, the group discussions

revealed a link between traditional gender-role orientations and school success in terms of track attendance and supported a broader understanding of aspects which are not only experienced by individual students, but also constructed within student groups. The classroom observation enabled to recognise manifold variations of behavioural patterns.

Some limitations of the study will be explored further on. Motivation – as part of the school commitment concept – is a very complex issue linked to different factors (such as self-efficacy or attributional styles) and influenced by different socialisation agencies. Future studies should address this shortcoming by using more differentiated indices. Another main issue is that the analysis is based on a survey design with one wave. Causal links can only be made plausible by referring to the assumptions made in the theoretical explorations. Thus, longitudinal studies are still necessary before obtaining a holistic picture about the mechanisms behind gender-specific school success. Since this study has demonstrated the benefit of a triangulated approach, we recommend combining quantitative event analysis with life history interviews.

In closing this paper and reflecting on the importance of these results, another argument is raised in the current debate on failing boys: Although boys show worse performance at school and have lower educational success, they still have better chances than girls in the labour market. However, the lower educational success of boys in school remains an issue, since there is group of boys from a poor family background that has the highest risk of leaving school with no or only a very low educational qualification, and thus being stigmatised in the labour market for their whole life. As can be learned from these mixed-method-results, teachers and parents need to deal with school alienation and make students aware of gender-roles, and that learning at school can be part of both female and male identity. Taking up the idea of Vespa (2009) that gender ideology can change as people experience new social settings, ‘undoing gender’ (Deutsch, 2007) seems to be possible and – in the light of the just presented results in regard to patriarchal gender-role orientations – promising to get disadvantaged boys ‘back in’.

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Notes

¹ In this review, we focus on sociological literature and will not refer to publications which understand gender as merely physiological or biological in the sense of the *gender role identity paradigm* (Pérez-Jiménez et al., 2007).

² The school system in the canton of Berne is very heterogeneous regarding class and school structures (different school tracks united in one school or even in one school class). Thus, we considered the clustering of students in class rooms.

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Músculo Corazón. Masculinidades en México

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Reviews (I)

Pasarge, M.L., Saray, H., (Eds). (2013). *Músculo Corazón. Masculinidades en México*. Ciudad de México: La cabra ediciones. ISBN: 978-6-077-73550-2.

Si hacemos un breve repaso a través de la historia del arte, encontramos al cuerpo desnudo motivo predilecto de escultores y pintores, considerado en época clásica objeto de deseo. Los griegos vestían cotidianamente pequeñas túnicas o togas y los atletas participaban desnudos en competencias deportivas cubriendo sus testículos, para no sufrir daños o molestias. El cuerpo no era considerado tabú, al igual que las demostraciones de amor entre hombres (copa de vino ateniense *Céfiro y Jacinto*, 490-485 a.c.). En Roma, destacó el torso descubierto en la escultura así como la esbelta desnudez de sus dioses (Hermes o Apolo).

Posteriormente, con el cristianismo fueron desapareciendo las representaciones artísticas de cuerpos desnudos - exceptuando las simbologías paganas - hasta la reaparición de formas masculinas renacentistas (Donatello, Miguel Ángel o Leonardo da Vinci). En época barroca asoma otro canon particular gracias a *Lacoonte* (1608) de El Greco y años más tarde, en temas mitológicos reaparecen torsos desnudos (*La fragua de Vulcano*, 1630, Diego Velásquez). Así, la historia del arte, ha representado la desnudez a través de diversas temáticas (David, Ingres o Delacroix). A finales del siglo XIX apreciamos otros artistas, como sería el caso del impresionista Bazille o el sueco Jansson, quienes acuden a grupos de hombres compartiendo espacios lúdicos, mientras que el figurativo Lucian Freud deleita con la desnudez de sus amantes en posición de reposo o actitud reflexiva. Las formas adolescentes de un Egon Posselt o un Larry Stanton, no pasan desapercibidas.

En Latinoamérica, numerosos artistas han trabajado la especialidad del desnudo masculino. Destacan el chileno Roberto Sebastián Matta; los nicaragüenses Hugo Palma-Ibarra, Omar D'león y Otto Aguilar; los mexicanos Manuel Rodríguez Lozano, Juan Soriano, Nahum B. Zenil,

Sebastián Moreno y Mario Patiño, o los colombianos Dario Morales, Lorenzo Jaramillo y Luis Caballero.

Así pues, los conceptos de belleza, cuerpo, sexo y género han cambiando con el transcurso del tiempo y en ello han influido las *nuevas masculinidades*. Cuestionemos: ¿Cómo miran sus cuerpos los hombres de siglo XXI? Desde la heterosexualidad o sin ella y particularmente en un México machista, ¿cómo mira un hombre el cuerpo desnudo de otro hombre?

Músculo corazón. Masculinidades en México va más allá del goce o la apreciación del desnudo; nos devela hombres de verdad, del diario convivir: abuelos, hijos adultos, maridos o vecinos. La obra huye del estereotipo cuerpo esbelto o transformado por el cirujano y apuesta por un tipo de belleza silenciada en nuestros días: la que dan los años, las arrugas, los pliegues grasos, las hermosas canas y las carnes rebosantes de kilos. Artistas, poetas, escritores, pintores, bailarines, músicos, historiadores, arquitectos, médicos, astrofísicos, ebanistas, payasos y toreros se desnudan por fuera y por dentro exhibiendo honestamente lo que son. *Músculo corazón* es una bofetada limpia - también desnuda - a esta sociedad plástica y enfermiza por las formas perfectas que busca aparentar lo que no es, a cambio de garantizar el éxito, la felicidad y la eterna juventud.

Los protagonistas retratados, con o sin experiencia en el debatido tema del desnudo masculino, afirman ser ellos mismos al quedarse en cueros, o visten traje de tinta negra en múltiples tatuajes. Abiertos a la hora de expresar su identidad, se encaraman en lujosos zapatos de tacón (acaso en representación de algunos “machos mexicanos”) con cierto cinismo exhibicionista - antaño joven, ahora viejo - aclarando que lo importante es el cuerpo deseado y amado.

El libro es generoso con la madurez del hombre cuarentón y la estética de proporciones diversas. Las formas en perfecta verticalidad cuerpo desnudo/pene/flauta recuerdan a través de un atril con partituras abiertas, la armonía fálica. En otras páginas de la obra, como corresponde a las nuevas masculinidades, también se nos invita a reflexionar en torno a las mentalidades, la cultura o la educación en nuestro actual siglo. Este maravilloso álbum, cierra con una última imagen que resalta la brillantez y majestuosidad del vello blanco: un escroto en forma de corazón, sonrío irreverente al lector, afirmando nuevamente que en cada una de las partes

de nuestra anatomía hay pasión y vida, seamos jóvenes, maduros o viejos. Qué mejor forma de culminar un libro. Los cuerpos maduros de hermosa celulitis y bellas arrugas, han llegado para quedarse!!!

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Challenging Hegemonic Masculinity

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Reviews (II)

Howson, R. (2012). *Challenging Hegemonic Masculinity*. Oxon: Routledge. ISBN: 978-0-4156-5376-3.

La masculinidad hegemónica ha sido el centro de atención de los estudios de masculinidad desde que Raewyn Connell acuñara este concepto durante la década de los ochenta. Con el paso del tiempo la evolución de su análisis ha sido más global incorporando no sólo la perspectiva occidental, sino que otras perspectivas que han llenado de diversidad los *men studies*. Sin embargo en este libro Howson señala la importancia de la mano de occidente en estos estudios, sobretodo de la segunda ola del feminismo y del movimiento gay y queer. Según el autor ambos han sido claves para el cuestionamiento del hombre y de la teorización de su construcción de género.

Paralelamente a lo expuesto, a lo largo del libro Howson también profundiza en los formas de estudio de la masculinidad, los cambios que se han ido articulando desde diferentes metodologías como la de orientación cuantitativa o cualitativa. Sin embargo el autor señala el peso que ha tenido la ideología de género y los movimientos de hombres en estas aproximaciones. Es decir, Howson considera que la aparición de ambos elementos ha dotado de mayor importancia a los estudios sobre las masculinidades. Existen algunos ejemplos cotidianos que vislumbran esta mayor presencia de la masculinidad eb el debate público como la publicación de los libros: *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* (1992) por John Gray y *Manhood* (1994) por Steve Biddulph.

El libro nos presenta diferentes debates y aproximaciones empíricas al análisis de la masculinidad hegemónica. Por ejemplo, en el capítulo 2 se nos detalla la complejidad de la teoría de la hegemonía y su estricta vinculación con las aportaciones de Gramsci. En el siguiente capítulo se profundiza en la vertiente práctica de la teoría de Connell y su vinculación con la justicia social. A posteriori, en el Capítulo 4, se enmarca dicha teoría en la corriente del construccionismo social y como este marco permite interpretar las

concepciones de género de forma múltiple. Es vertiente ha delimitado un discurso de género en el que ha sido posible hablar de multiplicidad de concepciones de género.

En los capítulos 5 y 6 se articula un debate sobre la operatividad del concepto de masculinidad hegemónica en el marco de los estudios jurídicos. En este sentido, se ahonda en el efecto que tiene determinados elementos de la masculinidad hegemónica, como la heteronormatividad, la agresividad y el mantenimiento del modelo “breadwinner”, en el tratamiento legal de la violencia de género. En los últimos capítulos se presenta un debate interesante sobre el futuro de los análisis de género vinculados a la hegemonía. En este sentido el autor se posiciona en un paradigma postmarxista en el que se considera necesario construir un discurso de género combativo que construya una estrategia política. Esta estrategia tendrá como principal propósito la búsqueda de la justicia social.

Podemos concluir señalando que la obra de Howson resulta de gran interés y utilidad para los intelectuales que están estudiando de la construcción de la masculinidad, pero también para los agentes sociales y los profesionales interesados en las desigualdades de género. Éstos últimos buscan respuestas a preguntas y dilemas cotidianos a los que el libro contribuye de forma importante.

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I would like to thank all the scholars who served as reviewers in 2014. As the editor of the journal *Masculinities and Social Change* I am very grateful for the evaluations realized which have contributed to the quality of this journal.

Oriol Ríos
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