

Impact of Institutional Diversity Initiatives and Support:  
Experiences of Queer Latinx Men at Hispanic Serving Institutions

by

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**DEDICATION**

To my family. Thank you for all your love and support.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Approximately 22 percent of Latinx millennials reported holding an LGBTQ identity. As new generations of students enroll in institutions of higher education, administrators are seeing an increase in the acceptance of queer students and the expectation for inclusive policies and services. With campus climate playing an important role in engagement and academic performance for both queer students and Latinx students, institutional diversity and support for queer Latinx men is an important component. There is an overall lack of research examining queer Latinx students and the impact of the intersectionality of their identities. Through examining the experiences of queer Latinx men at an HSI, their perception of their campus climate, and the impact of the intersectionality of the identities they hold on their experiences and identity development, administrators, professional staff, and faculty at institutions of higher education will gain insight into the experiences and needs of queer Latinx men.

Using a narrative inquiry approach for this qualitative study, eleven queer Latinx men were interviewed. This study was guided by the Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development and the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity. When considering how the intersecting identities of sexuality, race, and gender impact the campus experiences of queer Latinx men, respondents expressed that masculinity, online research, heteronormativity and homophobia, and racism played into their identity development and experiences. With regard to how attending an HSI promoted or hindered identity development for queer Latinx men, respondents expressed that the institutional status as an HSI did not promote or support their identity development.

Institutional resources queer Latinx men utilized at HSIs consisted being involved with the institution's LGBTQIA office, participating in student organizations such as GSA, the Hispanic Student Society, and First-Generation Programs, utilizing health and wellness resources to promote a holistic experience, and engaging with individuals who hold similar identities.

The implications of this study include increasing representation faculty and staff who hold Latinx and queer identities, addressing lack of awareness of resources through intentional engagement and marketing in addition to enhancing transparency with how the institution is utilizing federal funding, redeveloping the criteria to become an HSI to reflect a demonstrated history of supporting the Hispanic community and effort to promote the academic achievement of Hispanic students, addressing events that have occurred in the campus community and the impact racial/ethnic and queer discrimination have on the campus climate, and placing an emphasis on supporting and providing resources to students with multiple marginalized intersecting identities.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

American Civil Liberties Union: ACLU

American College Personnel Association: ACPA

American Psychological Association: APA

Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution: AANAPISI

Federal Bureau of Investigation: FBI

Gender and Sexuality Association / Gay Straight Alliance: GSA

Higher Education Act: HEA

Historically Black Colleges & Universities: HBCU

Hispanic Serving Institutions: HSI

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual: LGBTQIA

Minority Serving Institutions: MSI

National Center for Educational Statistics: NCES

Predominantly Black Institutions: PBI

Predominantly White Institutions: PWI

Tribal College or University: TCU

United States: U.S.

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

Postsecondary education is in a constant state of change and transformation as new generations of students enroll and bring new needs and demands (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011). As a result of this continuous change in needs and expectations, institutions of higher education must adapt and evolve (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011). A study by the American Psychological Association found that approximately “one in six college students is lesbian, gay, or bisexual” (Harley et al., 2002, p. 525). Looking specifically at public postsecondary education, the Association of Governing Boards conducted a study and found that around one million students at institutions of higher education identify as members of the LGBTQIA community (Trammell, 2014).

Various labels are often used in reference to Hispanic individuals in an effort to be inclusive (Rudick et al., 2017). Some of these terms include Latin@, Chican@, and Latinx. These labels “denote a range of political, ethnic, and historical relationships” (Rudick et al., 2017, p. 2). The label Latinx was first used in queer communities in 2004 in an effort to promote inclusion and began appearing online in 2014 (Salinas Jr. & Lozano, 2019). Additionally, the term Latinx “is more inclusive of transgender, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming individuals,” (Acosta, 2018, p. 407) gender-queer, and gender-fluid people (Paterson & Battle, 2018). Within this manuscript, the term Latinx will be used as a gender inclusive term for individuals of Latin American culture or racial identity. The term womxn will be used for the traditional term for “women” as an inclusive term that includes “trans womxn, womxn of color, and nonbinary folx” (Muse, 2019). The terms Queer and LGBTQIA will be

used interchangeably as an umbrella term for sexual orientation and gender identity. However, at times, the specific terms utilized in the literature will be used when discussing previous research in order to accurately reflect the specific populations included in the particular research when differing from the overarching terms.

Looking at the U.S., approximately 4.5 percent of the population identifies as a member of the queer community (Przworski & Piedra, 2020). Cohen et al. (2018) found that 22 percent of Latinx millennials reported holding an LGBTQ identity. The Williams Institute compiled the Same-sex Couple and LGBT Demographic Data Interactive (2016, 2019) to provide insight into the LGBTQIA population in the U.S. The data provide a picture of the demographics of LGBTQIA individuals in the U.S., the Southern Region of the U.S., and Texas when compared to other racial identities. Table 1 shows the percentages of the demographics of LGBTQIA individuals in the U.S in 2016 and 2018.

**Table 1**

*Percentages of Select Descriptive Statistics for LGBT Demographic Data in 2016 and 2018*

	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Sex</b>	Female	52	58
	Male	48	42
<b>Race</b>	Black	11	12
	American Indian and Alaskan Native	1	1
	Asian and Pacific Islander	2	3
	Hispanic	15	21
	Other	10	5
	White	61	58

*Source.* Same-sex Couple and LGBT Demographic Data Interactive, 2016

*Note.* Descriptors presented in alphabetical order.

Table 2 shows the percent of LGBTQIA individuals residing in each state within the Southern region of the U.S. in 2016 and 2018.

**Table 2**

*Percentage of LGBT Individuals in Southern Region in U.S.*

	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>State</b>	Alabama	3.2	3.1
	Arkansas	3.3	3.3
	Delaware	4.2	4.5
	Florida	4.1	4.6
	Georgia	3.9	4.5
	Kentucky	3.8	3.4
	Louisiana	3.8	3.9
	Mississippi	3.3	3.5
	North Carolina	3.5	4.0
	Oklahoma	3.7	3.8
	South Carolina	2.9	3.5
	Tennessee	2.8	3.5
	Texas	3.8	4.1
	Virginia	3.3	3.9
	West Virginia	3.2	4.0

*Source.* Same-sex Couple and LGBT Demographic Data Interactive, 2016, 2019

*Note.* Descriptors presented in alphabetical order.

Table 3 displays the demographics of LGBTQIA individuals residing in Texas in 2018.

**Table 3**

*2018 Descriptive Statistics for LGBT Demographic Data in Texas*

	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Sex</b>	Female	56
	Male	44
<b>Race</b>	American Indian and Alaskan Native	1
	Asian	2
	Black	11
	Latino/a	39
	More Than One	6
	Native Hawaiian	1
	White	40

*Source.* Same-sex Couple and LGBT Demographic Data Interactive, 2019

*Note.* Descriptors presented in alphabetical order.

**Importance of Higher Education**

Latinx is the largest minority group in the United States at an estimated 18.3 percent of the U.S. population in 2018, an increase from 15.4 percent reported in Census 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010, 2018). Within higher education, Latinx

students continue to be marginalized and maintaining lower levels of academic achievement (Salinas Jr., 2017). Currently, there is an academic achievement gap and high rates of dropout among Latinx men when compared to Latinx womxn and all other racial and ethnic groups (DeGarmo & Martinex Jr, 2006; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Sanchez et al., 2018). These high rates have been contributed to cultural issues, high poverty rates, internalized oppression, and institutional and societal barriers (DeGarmo & Martinex Jr, 2006; Eamon, 2005; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Latinx students face institutional barriers when attending poorly funded secondary education schools with limited access to additional academic opportunities, such as advanced courses or academic support resources (Brown et al., 2003; Eamon, 2005). These barriers contribute to a reduction in academic preparedness for postsecondary education (Brown et al., 2003). Latinx students in postsecondary education are more likely to be academically successful when in a supportive environment and when they have a positive relationship with other students and their faculty (Eamon, 2005; Núñez et al., 2011).

Higher education has seen an increase in access and persistence over the years; however, there remains a gap between the educational attainment of White men and Hispanic men and between womxn and men (Ross et al., 2012). Between 1980 and 2010, the percentage of men enrolling in higher education has decreased, while the percentage of womxn enrolling has increased (Ross et al., 2012). Within the U.S., Latinx individuals are the fastest growing racial group (Pérez II & Okello, 2017). However, within postsecondary education, they are underrepresented (Pérez II & Okello, 2017). With the *Higher Education Opportunity Act*, the U.S. Department of

Education was directed to assess and produce a report documenting “the gaps in access to and completion of higher education by minority men and to outline specific policies that can help address these gaps” (Ross et al., 2012, p. v).

### **Challenges for Latinx Students**

In addition to institutional barriers, Latinx men have encountered gendered socialization within a White heteropatriarchal society (Pérez II & Okello, 2017). This gendered socialization has led to a negative impact on the educational attainment of Latinx men (Pérez II & Okello, 2017). Society has taught and conditioned men to not express their feeling and emotions (hooks, 2004). Similarly, machismo is a term used to describe Latinx men “who are domineering, emotionless, and anti-intellectual” (Pérez II & Okello, 2017, p. 897). However, even within a patriarchal society, men need to be able to experience love and to express love (hooks, 2004). Men are not only conditioned to suppress their feelings and to act in a more masculine manner by their fathers and the other men in their lives but also by womxn they encounter and are raised by. Both men and womxn are taught from a young age that men are supposed to be masculine and in order to do that, they must be closed off, tough, and not express or feel emotion or love (hooks, 2004).

### **Challenges for Queer Students**

Within society, sexual orientation is often viewed or understood as a binary construct, being either heterosexual or homosexual (Dolan, 2013; Eliason, 1997; Galupo, 2006; Horowitz & Newcomb, 1999; Roberts et al., 2015; Rust, 1995, 2000b; Zinik, 2000). However, heterosexism, “attitudes, actions, and institutional practices that privilege heterosexuality and subordinate people on the basis of their gay, lesbian,

bisexual, or transgender orientation” (Launius & Hassel, 2015, p. 193) presents a form of oppression towards queer individuals. Additionally, heteronormativity, a societal construct based on the assumption of heterosexuality, promotes the idea of heterosexuality as being normal and homosexuality as abnormal (Launius & Hassel, 2015). Students who are attracted to more than one gender, nonmonosexual students, often known as bisexual, pansexual, queer, etc., find themselves being excluded by society, both heterosexual and homosexual communities (Dolan, 2013; Henry, 2018; Eliason, 1997; Roberts et al., 2015; Rust, 2000a). Additionally, monosexism contributes to the negative experiences of nonmonosexual students due to the social belief that if an individual is not heterosexual they must either be gay or lesbian (Dolan, 2013; Eliason, 1997; Galupo, 2006; Henry, 2018; Horowitz & Newcomb, 1999; Israel & Mohr, 2008; Roberts et al., 2015; Rust, 1995, 2000b; Zinik, 2000).

### **Intersectionality**

Intersectionality is considered to be complex due to multiple identities impacting an individual’s experiences (Wijeyesinghe & Jones, 2014). It is critical to take into account that multiple identities all contribute to an individual’s experiences, and the term intersectionality was developed to specifically examine the experiences of Black womxn (Crenshaw, 1989). To ignore intersectionality would result in a failure to accurately understand and reflect the true experiences of an individual. When an individual holds multiple marginalized identities, it can cause being marginalized by both identities and lead to experiences that are not readily understood by others outside the group (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). With regard to queer Latinx men, a student’s identity can “impact their social development and collegiate experiences,

but they also have an impact on the way LGBT students experience the political, social, and economic power of an institution” (Thomas-Card & Ropers-Huilman, 2014, p. 82). Queer people of color are more likely to experience discrimination due to their intersecting racial/ethnic, sexual, and gender identities (Przeworski & Piedra, 2020).

The experiences of students, based on their identities: sexual orientation, gender, race, and ethnicity, can have an impact on academic performance, retention rates, social experiences, and overall student wellness. When looking at queer Latinx men in postsecondary education, it is important to consider what resources are available to assist students, what institutional policies are in place to protect students, and the perceptions and experiences of these students. It is important to look at how intersectionality impacts the experiences of queer Latinx men.

### **Summary of Theoretical/Conceptual Framework**

Student populations within higher education have varying experiences. When it comes to LGBTQIA students in higher education, the theories and models used tend to be dated (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005). Many of the theoretical frameworks and models were developed by focusing on “the resolution of internal conflict related to identification as lesbian or gay, and informed what is commonly termed the *coming-out* [emphasis originally in text] process” (p. 25-26). Additionally, the various theories and models often utilized populations of White men, rather than diverse samples with regards to ethnicity and gender. As a result, the various theories and models tend to be silent about race and ethnicity and male dominated and focused. With regard to bisexual and transgender individuals, the various stage models do not capture the full

nature of their intersecting identities (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005). As a result, a theoretical framework and model that are more inclusive of diverse populations were chosen for this study. Looking specifically at queer Latinx men, the Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development (Dillon et al., 2011) and Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (Jones & McEwen, 2000) were the theoretical models used to guide this study. The theoretical models will be briefly described below and further expanded upon in Chapter Two.

The Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development is made up of two parallel elements of sexual identity development: individual sexual identity development and the social identity process (Dillon et al., 2011). Both processes are made up of the same five stages: 1) Compulsory Heterosexuality, 2) Active Exploration, 3) Diffusion, 4) Deepening and Commitment, and 5) Synthesis. The model applies to both sexual minorities and heterosexuals. Dillon et al. (2011) based compulsory heterosexuality off the term coined by Rich (1980) and applied by Mohr (2002). The compulsory heterosexuality stage within the model references to acceptance of the societal systems that accept heterosexuality as normal and that individuals are innately attracted to the opposite sex. Individuals tend to start off in this stage and progress out when actively questioning and challenging the assumptions. Active exploration is the intentional exploration or experimentation of sexual needs, values, orientation, or preferences. This can happen cognitively or behaviorally. While active exploration is not required, it almost always occurs for LGB individuals. When engaged by heterosexual individuals, it usually consists of exploration of partner characteristics and activity preferences. Diffusion is made up of

carefree diffusion and diffused diffusion and is the “absence of commitment and of systematic exploration” (Dillon et al., 2011, p. 662). Carefree diffusion is that having little concern regarding sexual identity or exploration. Diffused diffusion is the experiencing of stress due to the lack of commitment towards sexual identity. The deepening and commitment stage consists of the increasing of commitment to one’s identity. Heterosexual individuals who did not progress out of compulsory heterosexuality would fall under committed compulsory heterosexuality and maintain and strengthen heterosexist assumptions. The synthesis stage can only be entered through deepening and commitment. Within this stage, individuals align their identity and beliefs with their attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, their sexual identity begins to be blended with other intersecting identities (Dillon et al., 2011).

Within the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity, identity is presented as fluid and ongoing (Jones & McEwen, 2000). While an individual may possess multiple intersecting identities, they may not display all of the identities they hold. While identities such as race and gender are external, identities such as sexual orientation may not be readily identifiable. All identities an individual hold make up an individual’s core identity. These identities can impact an individual’s experience based on what identity is being expressed and/or the environment (Jones & McEwen, 2000).

### **Campus Climate**

Campus climate plays an important role in student satisfaction, academic success, and retention (Parker & Trolan, 2018). Marginalized students who perceive the campus climate to be negative have a higher rate of experiencing mental health

issues. Campus climates are made up of “the attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of the institutional members about the campus environment” (Parker & Trolan, 2018, p. 436). Research looking at campus climate is critical in order for institutions to maintain a better understanding of the beliefs and perceptions of the campus community (Parker & Trolan, 2018; Vaccaro, 2014).

When the campus climate is perceived to be positive, students are more likely to have higher rates of persistence and academic success (Parker & Trolan, 2018). Research by Harper and Hurtado (2007) found that students of color are more likely to report a negative campus climate. Additionally, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA) students tend to encounter negative campus climates (Parker & Trolan, 2018). Postsecondary institutions continue to maintain campus environments that are negative towards racial and sexual minorities (Ocampo & Soodjinda, 2016). Both LGBTQIA individuals and people of color are marginalized as a result of “cultural, political, institutional, and interpersonal practices” (Kulick et al., 2017, p. 1125). LGBTQIA people of color are at an even higher risk of experiencing forms of distress as a result of their intersecting identities (Kulick et al., 2017).

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

This narrative qualitative study examined the experiences of queer Latinx men at an HSI. As defined by the *Higher Education Act* (HEA), an HSI is an institution of higher education that has an enrollment of full-time undergraduate students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students and at least 50 percent of the institution’s Hispanic students are low-income (NCES, 2020). HSIs are unique MSIs in that the institutions

were not established with the sole intent of providing support to marginalized students (Brown et al., 2003). The HSI designation is a result of a change in the demographics of enrolled students (Marin & Pereschica, 2017). A public four-year HSI in the Southwest region of the U.S. was utilized in this study. The selected institution is also designated as a PWI as the majority of the enrolled student population is White. Additionally, the selected institution is in its first year as an HSI. The population included in this study consisted of Latinx men who identify as queer. While the population size of queer students of color was too large to examine in full, by limiting the study to queer Latinx men enrolled in a public four-year HSI in the Southwest region of the U.S., the population size was narrowed and focused on a population that had not previously been examined in the larger body of research.

Conducting this study encountered a series of limitations. While empirical research has been conducted looking at the experiences and needs of queer students and Latinx men, individually, few studies had looked at the intersectionality of these identities. Additionally, while studies have previously been conducted looking at the experiences of queer students and men of color at PWIs and HBCUs, few studies have looked at the experiences of queer Latinx men at HSIs in general. Additionally, it must be noted that while an institution of higher education may hold a designation of an HSI, the institution's culture may still reflect that of a PWI. By focusing only on HSIs, the findings may not be transferable to other institutions. Through conducting a qualitative study, the findings will not be generalizable.

## **Purpose and Significance**

The purpose of this narrative qualitative study was to examine the experiences of queer Latinx men at a four-year postsecondary institution designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) as established by the U.S. Department of Education's Minority Serving Institution (MSI) classification. While faculty within institutions of higher education produce many articles and theoretical perspectives related to LGBTQIA students, institutions themselves have not advanced at the same level (Renn, 2010; McGlynn, 2017; Tsui, 2007; Paluck & Green, 2009). There was a need for additional research to look at the experiences of marginalized students and their perceptions of their campus climate (Gates et al., 2017; Parker & Trolan 2018). There was an overall call for research examining queer Latinx students and the impact of the intersectionality of their identities (Kulick et al., 2017; Meyer et al., 2008; Nemoto et al., 2011; Hernandez & Fraynd, 2014). In this study, the focus was to examine the experiences of queer Latinx men at a designated HSI. It was intended to conduct research on this topic to provide insight in an area that was lacking empirical findings. The findings were utilized to provide policy recommendations and strategies to enhance the overall experience and academic performance of queer Latinx men at HSIs.

It is important for institutions of higher education to be knowledgeable of the needs of queer students, Latinx men, and those with intersecting identities in order to ensure a safe and inclusive environment is provided (Morgan et al., 2011). Failure to take the needs of queer Latinx men into consideration may lead to students feeling a sense of isolation and hopelessness (Morgan et al., 2011). While previous studies have

been conducted on queer students and Latinx students (Brown, 2016; Duran & Pérez II, 2019; Eaton & Rios, 2017; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Kulick et al., 2017), the experiences of queer Latinx men have been understudied in the larger body of literature. Through this research, administrators, professional staff, and faculty at institutions of higher education will gain insight into the experiences and needs of queer Latinx men.

## CHAPTER II

### Introduction

As new generations of students enroll in institutions of higher education, administrators are seeing an increase in the acceptance of LGBTQIA students and the expectation for inclusive policies and services (Ball, 2013; Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Trammell, 2014). As a result, postsecondary institutions are seeing that “students in the LGBT community and their families and friends expect institutions of higher education to be assertive in enforcing policies that will ensure their overall well-being” (Ball, 2013, p. 23). The process of developing more inclusive campuses can aid in the removal of barriers that may prevent some students from accessing higher education or persisting once on campus.

Progressing through their postsecondary education, students tend to experiment with various identities (Morgan et al., 2011). The social and political climate at institutions of higher education may create challenges for students to fully experiment with and develop their identities. In an effort to address the needs of LGBTQIA students as they navigate their identities, postsecondary institutions should ensure the campus climate promotes inclusion, acceptance, and safety. Without a feeling of support from the institution and campus community, LGBTQIA students may feel a sense of isolation or hopelessness (Morgan et al., 2011). Studies have indicated that LGBTQIA students have a higher risk of having lower academic performance as a result of missing class due to fearing for their safety (Morgan et al., 2011).

Studies have found that when students are engaged with the campus environment and involved in extracurricular activities, they are more likely to

experience increased development and learning (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005).

Additionally, being involved in an organization or attending events related to an individual's specific identity, such as race, gender, or sexuality, students are more likely to explore and develop their personal identity (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005).

The perceptions of LGBTQIA individuals on the campus climate at their postsecondary institution, are impacted by their personal experiences with tolerance and acceptance while on campus (Sevecke et al., 2015). Jones (2014) described how institutions can impact the experiences of students and campus climate by mirroring the views of the community and normalizing ideologies. By doing so, institutions may engage in heteronormativity and view sexuality through “binary lenses of ‘accepted sexuality’ and ‘non-accepted sexuality’” (Jones, 2014, p. 1). In order to avoid such views, it is important for institutions to develop an understanding of their campus climate and institutional policies (Jones, 2014).

### **Latinx Students**

While the Latinx population is the fastest growing population, they also have the highest dropout rate of any marginalized group in the U.S. (Cavazos Jr. et al., 2010; DeGarmo & Martinex Jr, 2006; Murakami-Ramvalho et al., 2010; Núñez & Kim, 2012; Núñez et al., 2011; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Sanchez et al., 2018). Within higher education Latinx men face many stereotypes they must overcome (Anderson, 2010). For example, it is often believed that Latinx men do not value education, are not fluent in the English language, or that they are simply lazy (Anderson, 2010). The completion rate of Latinx men in higher education has been a concern of policy makers (Sáenz et al., 2013). Within the state of Texas, it has been a goal of closing the

gaps in education between racial and gender groups. A specific goal was to increase the success rate of Latinx men. Institutions of higher education, within the state of Texas, have seen a higher level of enrollment since the development of the *Closing the Gaps by 2015* program by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2014). It was the goal of the coordinating board to better meet the needs of students by enhancing the assessment tools utilized by institutions of higher education in Texas to determine students' level of college readiness. Previously, institutions had the ability to pick from a list of assessments, resulting in each institution having a different standard and method of scoring. As a result, students in secondary schools and guidance counselors had difficulties determining an appropriate skills level. The new assessment standards require all institutions of higher education in Texas to utilize the same assessment and meet the same standards. Additionally, when students fall below the required skills level, college advisors work with the students to determine their needs and to place them in developmental courses that best fit their individual needs (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2014).

Latinx students have often enrolled in a small number of postsecondary institutions (de los Santos Jr & Cuamea, 2010). These institutions tend to be community colleges in close proximity to family (Marin & Pereschica, 2017; Turcious-Cotto & Milan, 2012). As a result, these institutions have become HSIs (de los Santos Jr & Cuamea, 2010; Marin & Pereschica, 2017). The concept of familismo contributes to Latinx students selecting institutions close to home (Kiyama et al., 2015; Turcious-Cotto & Milan, 2012). Familismo is “a belief in the importance of

maintaining strong family ties, the expectation that family is the primary source of support, an emphasis on loyalty to family, and a commitment to the family over individual needs” (p. 31). Family often serves as the primary form of support for Latinx students (Turcios-Cotto & Milan, 2012). There is often a sense of familial obligations (Laird et al., 2007). For Latinx students who attend institutions away from their families, they tend to build selected family groups. These selected family groups aid in providing support and promoting a sense of belonging (Kiyama et al., 2015).

### ***Sense of Belonging***

Sense of belonging is considered to be the feeling of mattering and being connected to or with a community (Strayhorn, 2018). It includes how a student perceives the level of support they receive from their institution, feeling connected with and mattering to the institution, and feeling respected and accepted by the institution, staff, faculty, and students (Strayhorn, 2018). Feelings of sense of belonging among Latinx students can be influenced by the level of interaction with faculty members and with diverse groups of students (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2020). When there is a lack on sense of belonging, individuals may see an increase in mental health issues and feeling of isolation (Strayhorn, 2018). Within postsecondary education, when students do not have a sense of belonging, they experience lower academic performance and withdraw at higher rates. Sense of belonging can be increased by positive perception of the campus environment and through strong peer and other social interactions (Strayhorn, 2018). The level of engagement a student has, socially and academically, influences their overall level of satisfaction and commitment towards the institution (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Latinx students who

attend an HSI are more likely to have higher levels of sense of belonging due to HSIs often having policies and programs that are more holistic and culturally sensitive to the experiences and needs of Latinx students (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2020).

It is believed that Latinx students are the least educated and prepared racial/ethnic group in the U.S. when competing in the global marketplace (de los Santos Jr & Cuamea, 2010). Hispanics are considered the largest racial/ethnic minority group in the U.S. (de los Santos Jr & Cuamea, 2010). As such, it is critical for HSIs to address challenges faced by Latinx students (de los Santos Jr & Cuamea, 2010).

### ***Diverse and Global Higher Education***

Postsecondary education prepares students to engage in a diverse and global society. Globalization presents a unique set of challenges for higher education (Olaniran & Agnello, 2008). It is often the case that globalization is put off by policymakers in an effort to promote competency testing (Olaniran & Agnello, 2008). It is important to consider the process being taken to promote globalization and what the actual contribution is (Fairclough, 2009). When the curriculum does not consider a diverse and global society, it will not effectively promote globalization (Olaniran & Agnello, 2008). Globalization is important in that it “informs the ways in which we encourage and train people to interact with, and open themselves to, other cultures and to build the relationship capital that makes the exercise of sharp power less likely” (Hunter et al., 2006, p. 269). As such, it is the responsibility of institutions of higher education to lead the way (Hunter et al., 2006; Olaniran & Agnello, 2008). Higher education is a key component of globalization (Gül et al., 2010). While higher education has seen an increase in globalization, it has been disproportionate among

various social and racial groups (Christopherson et al., 2008). Individuals who are not part of the dominant group or those who may not have the necessary resources may not fully have access to higher education or to engage in globalization (Christopherson et al., 2008; Gül et al., 2010).

### ***Rate of Enrollment***

While the number of Latinx individuals enrolling in postsecondary education has increased in recent decades, there is a lower percentage of Latino men when compared to Latina womxn (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Latinx students enrolled in postsecondary education in 2015 accounted for 36.6 percent of all enrolled students (Sanchez et al., 2018). The 2015 percentage increased 15.9 percent from 21.7 percent in 2000. It is estimated that the percentage of Latinx students enrolling in higher education will increase by 25 percent by 2024 (Sanchez et al., 2018). This occurrence could be, in part, caused by an increased potential for Latinx men to drop out of high school and to pursue employment rather than postsecondary education (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). A 2004 report by NCES found that 28.4 percent of Latinx men dropped out of high school compared to 18.5 percent of Latinx womxn (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009).

By 2030, the U.S. population is projected to consist of three out of ten people being of Latinx heritage, research has continued to indicate that the enrollment of Latinx students in college has not seen an overall increase (Núñez et al., 2011). Additionally, it is believed that by 2030, 25 percent of secondary school students will be Latinx (Benitez, 1998). While the Latinx population in the U.S. is on the rise, the rate of educational achievement has not risen accordingly. A 1995 report found that

the difference in high school completion between Latinx and White students was 27 percent, while White and Black students only saw a five percent difference (Benitez, 1998).

By 1997, enrollment of Latinx students had risen to slightly over one million students (Benitez, 1998). A review of enrollment data by the U.S. Department of Education of all postsecondary institutions in the U.S. found that only eight percent of enrolled students were Latinx. Additionally, of the eight percent of enrolled Latinx students, over half were enrolled within approximately 177 institutions. These 177 institutions maintained a student demographic of over 25 percent identifying as Latinx (Benitez, 1998). The literature explained that Latinx students tend to be more likely to enroll in HSIs (Núñez et al., 2011).

As a result of the increasing Latinx population, institutions of higher education must begin developing resources aimed at supporting Latinx students (Brown et al., 2003). It was explained that the rate of enrollment of Latinx students at institutions of higher education have increased to 35 percent in 25 years since 1980. According to the 2000 census, approximately 10 percent of Latinx individuals in the U.S. had a college education. While the percentage has increased over time, the rate is still lower than the national average of 25 percent (Brown et al., 2003). The rate of Latinx students enrolling in postsecondary education has increased from 54 percent in 2002 to 70 percent in 2012 (Derieg et al., 2017). However, when looking at the difference in rates between men and womxn, approximately 13 percent fewer Latinx men enroll in postsecondary education at 62 percent and 76 percent, respectively (Derieg et al., 2017).

When looking at the average high school dropout rate for Latinx students, it was found that approximately 30 percent dropped out in 2000 (Brown et al., 2003). This rate is double that of African American students and triple that of White students. In order to increase the number of Latinx students enrolling in postsecondary education, strategies must be developed to assist students while still enrolled in secondary schools (Brown et al., 2003).

While there are differences in the experiences of Hispanic individuals, they “share the common experience of navigating systemic racism” within the U.S. (Rudick et al., 2017, p. 2). Additionally, they often face a series of economic, political, and educational barriers within the U.S. (Rudick et al., 2017). Latinx students face many potential challenges in pursuing postsecondary education, including income level, parental education, level of academic preparation, and knowledge of the college enrollment process (Kiyama et al., 2015; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Of 1.9 million Latinx men between the age of 18 and 34, approximately 28.1 percent of Latinx men, were enrolled in postsecondary education (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Of the same age group, 2.1 million Latinx womxn, approximately 35.4 percent of Latinx womxn, were enrolled in postsecondary education. Comparing fall 2004 enrollment rates at two-year postsecondary institutions between Latinx, White, and African American students, it was found that 54.4 percent of enrolled students identified as Latinx compared to 36.1 percent identifying as White and 42.5 percent identifying as African American. Approximately 35 percent of Latinx students enrolled at two-year postsecondary institutions obtain a degree within six years of enrollment. At four-year postsecondary institutions, approximately 55 percent of Latinx students obtain a degree within six

years of enrollment (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Additionally, Latinx men often experience difficulty adjusting to the campus culture, are unaware of academic resources available, and are less likely to interact with faculty (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2020).

### ***Barriers to Higher Education***

There are many barriers faced by Latinx students when enrolling in and navigating postsecondary education (Brown et al., 2003). With a large number of Latinx students being first-generation college students, these students find that they are unable to “look to their families for guidance” and must learn how to navigate the system on their own (Brown et al., 2003, p. 42). Some of these barriers include lack of financial support, racial/ethnic identity development, and lack of representation in postsecondary education (Valle & Salinas Jr., 2018). Additionally, many Latinx students and their families are unaware of the financial aid process (Salinas Jr. & Hidrowoh, 2018). If students are unaware of the financial aid process, they may be unaware of the actual cost of higher education (Brown et al., 2003). As a result of not knowing about the availability of federal funding, many Latinx students and their families either decide higher education is too expensive or select an institution based off the lowest listed price. This process tends to lead many Latinx students to enroll in two-year institutions in order to obtain what is considered to be a more affordable option (Brown et al., 2003). Additionally, due to a fear of being perceived as stupid for not knowing particular information about how to navigate postsecondary education, Latinx students tend to not to ask questions (Laird et al., 2007). The avoiding asking for help is attributed to machismo pride (Salinas Jr. & Hidrowoh, 2018).

The barriers faced by many Latinx students enrolling in postsecondary education is staggering. It is apparent that, whether negative or positive, family can play an important role in the decision-making process by many Latinx students when considering postsecondary education. Núñez et al. (2011) explained that two-year institutions tend to be viewed, by Latinx students and their families, as a better option due to the cost and the proximity to home.

With research, such as Brown et al. (2003), stating that a large percentage of Latinx students and their families do not fully understand how financial aid works and do not take into account the potential reduction in the cost of attendance when selecting an institution, it raises the question of why postsecondary institutions and secondary schools are not working together to educate students on the true cost of higher education and how to receive financial aid. Through the use of programs designed to educate Latinx students and their families about the process for selecting and navigating a postsecondary institution, Latinx students would potentially have the ability to make a better-informed decision and encounter fewer roadblocks when enrolling. Additionally, these strategies would potentially address some of the issues seen when working with First-Generation College Students. Being aware of the many different departments and resources at an institution could enable students to be more academically successful (Brown et al., 2003).

An increase in legal challenges to affirmative action laws caused some Latinx students to question whether they were welcome to pursue postsecondary education (Brown et al., 2003). In an effort to overcome the legal issues surrounding affirmative action, states began establishing new policies for admission into institutions of higher

education. States, such as California, Texas, and Florida, developed a new process that would provide the top percentage of graduating students from each high school in the state with automatic admission into a state institution. This process was designed with the intention of providing a more even playing field for students that may not have access to the same resources as students in other schools. However, while more Latinx students were being admitted into institutions of higher education, they did not always have the level of academic preparedness that was needed to be successful. In an effort to aid students that may not be academically prepared, institutions began developing academic support programs aimed at retaining Latinx students (Brown et al., 2003).

### **Queer Theories**

The term ‘queer’ continues to evolve and lacks a formal and agreed upon definition (Ahmed, 2006; Butler, 1993; Dilley, 1999; Gamson, 1995; Gedro & Mizzi, 2014; Halperin, 2003; Mayhew, 2007; Walters, 1996). Similar to queer theory, feminist theories have encountered series of revision as a result of societal changes. Queer theory emerged from feminist theory due to the lack of recognition by feminism of the experiences of and challenges faced by “women of color, working-class feminists, lesbians, and others” (Walters, 1996, p. 831). Feminist theory is an academic framework that originated as a focus on the conditions of women’s lives and their experiences within society (Kolmar & Bartkowski, 2013). It is a perspective for looking at society as a “basis for understanding every area of our lives” (Bunch, 1979, p. 9). Feminist theory provides a method for examining and understanding events and experiences that occur (hooks, 1991). Queer theory is an academic framework that attempts to interpret gender, sex, and sexuality while avoiding binary reasoning

(Marinucci, 2016). The combination of the queer aspects of gender, sex, and sexuality within feminist theory with the feminist aspects of gender, sex, and sexuality within queer theory results in queer feminism (Marinucci, 2016).

Sawicki (2013) refers to queer feminism as “an eccentric, provocative and unruly feminist practice, one able to risk, challenge, and transform itself, any static sense of its beloved objects and self-understandings, its sense of temporal and spatial orders” (p. 75). As a result of the term queer remaining open, it allows for “the possibility of theorizing ‘beyond the hyphen,’ beyond the additive models (race, class, gender, sexual orientation = oppressed identity) that have so often seemed to set up new hierarchies or retreated instead into an empty recitation of ‘difference’” (Walters, 1996, p. 832-833). The use of the term queer has a history of being used as a negative epithet (Butler, 1993; Dilley, 1999; Gedro & Mizzi, 2014; Walters, 1996). However, it has also been used as a means for reclaiming the negative language used to oppress the LGBTQIA community (Walters, 1996). Additionally, it is, at times, used as an umbrella term for the LGBTQIA community in a similar manner to how ‘people of color’ has a tendency to be used as an inclusive term for various ethnic and racial groups (Dilley, 1999; Gamson, 1995; Morris, 2005). Referencing the use of the term queer, Hennessy (1993) explained

By embracing the category used to shame and cast out sexual deviants, queer theory defiantly refuses the terms of the dominant discourse. Touting queerness is a gesture of rebellion against the pressure to be invisible or apologetically abnormal. It is an in-your-face rejection of the proper response to heteronormativity, a version of acting up. (p. 967)

Honeychurch (1996) explained that sexual orientation is not solely private. It is an identity that is interwoven throughout an individual's experiences. Sexual orientation is interpreted and impacted differently based on different elements of identity, such as race, gender, class, and ability (Honeychurch, 1996).

Originally coined by Teresa de Lauretis, queer theory was used as the title of a conference she held at the University of California, Santa Cruz in February of 1990 (Halperin, 2003). It was her desire to connect the term queer, used by activists, to the academic world (Gedro & Mizzi, 2014; Halperin, 2003; Jagose, 2009). de Lauretis, use of the phrase, queer theory, was meant to be "deliberately disruptive" (Halperin, 2003, p. 340). It was the goal of challenging the field and the current empirical work as a means for creating a space to develop and engage in research that avoided the traditional "hegemony or white, male, middle-class models of analysis" (p. 340). As a result of de Lauretis' work, queer theory was able to obtain an academic standing, recognition, and respect that had not yet been achieved by lesbian and gay studies (Halperin, 2003).

The use of queer theory has proven to be beneficial to the field and within the LGBTQIA community. Discussing the accomplishments of queer theory, Halperin (2003) explained that queer theory has provided the ability to question "the relations between sexuality and gender, both as analytic categories and as lived experiences" (p. 341). Additionally, queer theory rejects fixed identity categories (Acosta, 2018). Feminist theory and queer theory are two theoretical frameworks that are considered to be interconnected (Gedro & Mizzi, 2014). Even with feminism promoting diversity and inclusion, the movement has a history of exclusion (Gedro & Mizzi, 2014). Gedro

and Mizzi (2014) explained that when it comes to queer theory and feminist theory, they “attempt to break down the continual use of roles, categories, and labels that suppress those who are in marginalized positions, such as LGBT people and LGBT topics (p. 453).

The use of queer theory in the field of education is important (Morris, 2005). “Thinking queerly is crucial because teachers may have queer students, may have queer colleagues and may be queer themselves” (p. 10). As such, a queer approach may help to reduce violence. Morris (2005) explained that “queer theory is about inclusion, contradiction, paradox. Queer theory is about competing narratives and entertaining the unthinkable” (p. 11). Neither intersectionality nor queer theory offer a specific approach for conducting research (Fotopoulou, 2012). While, within qualitative research, there are many methodological approaches that are appropriate with intersectionality and queer theory, a narrative approach provides the most fitting means for gaining insight about an individual’s experiences (Fotopoulou, 2012). O’Connor (1995) argued for a narrative approach as a means “to give voice to these [queer] teenagers and protect their identities” (p. 9). “Queer theory’s task lies in visibilizing [sic], critiquing, and separating the normal (statistically determined) from the normative (morally determined)” (Giffney, 2004, p. 75). Dilley (1999) explained that “queer theory might offer the most qualitative of methodologies for collecting and analyzing data” (p. 461). “*Queer theory* [emphasis originally in text] houses the analytic tools used to examine what is ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal,’ primarily through deconstructing uses of sexuality in society” (Dilley, 1999, p. 469).

### ***Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development***

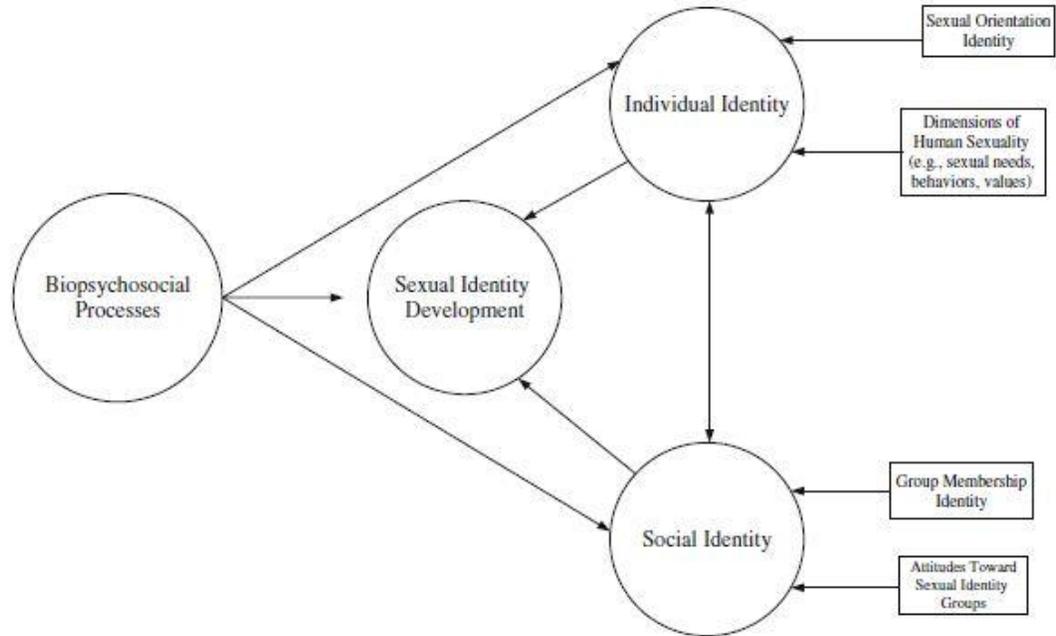
The Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development consists of two parallel elements of development: individual sexual identity development and social identity process (Dillon et al., 2011). Dillon et al. (2011) defined sexual identity development as “the individual and social processes by which persons acknowledge and define their sexual needs, values, sexual orientation, preferences for sexual activities, modes of sexual expression, and characteristics of sexual partners” (p. 657). An important component of the Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development that differentiates it from other sexual identity or queer theories is that heterosexuality can also be applied to the theory (Dillon et al., 2011).

The social identity process focuses on the group membership identity or considering oneself to be a member of a particular group (Dillon et al., 2011). The individual sexual identity focuses on the sexual identity held. Figure 1 illustrates the model. While both the individual identity process and social identity process utilize the same five sexual identity development statuses outlined in Figure 2, the social identity component is specific to considering yourself as a member of a group of individuals who hold a similar sexual identity while the individual identity component is specific to identifying your sexual identity. While an individual may consider themselves to be queer, they may not consider themselves to be a member of the queer community. As such, they may achieve deepening and commitment or synthesis within their individual identity but not within their social identity. Dillon et al. (2011) explained that societal heterosexism can contribute to an individual holding a particular sexual identity but not wanting to participate in a group membership

identity. It is possible for sexual identity development to be conscious and/or unconscious on all stages of the model.

**Figure 1**

*Determinants of Sexual Identity Development*



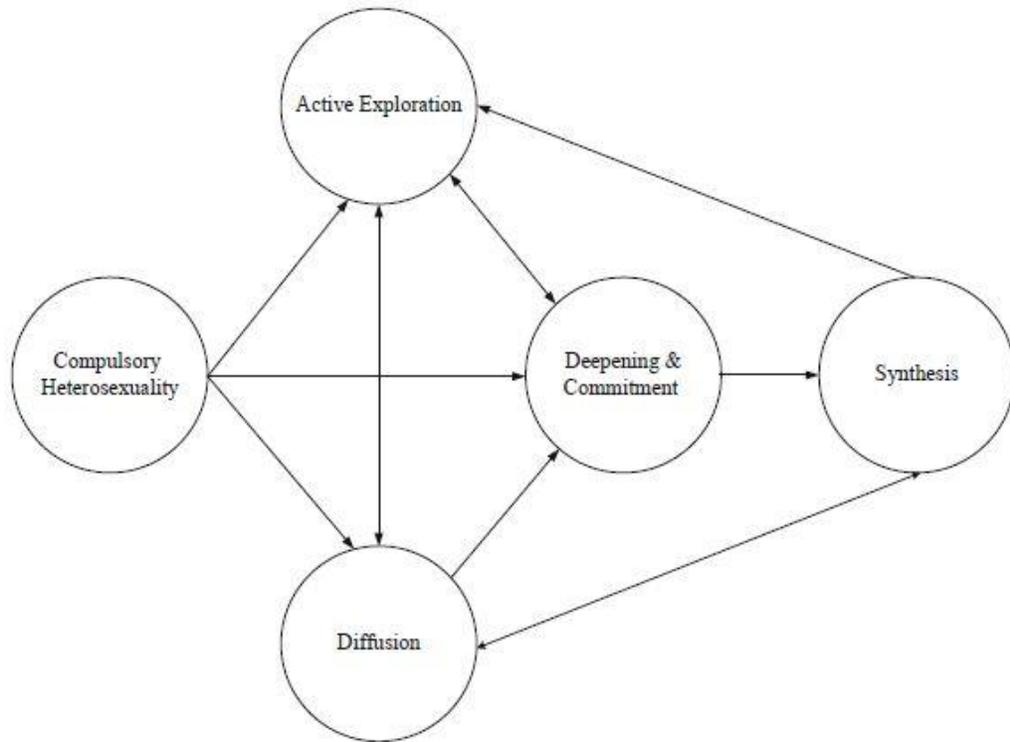
*Source.* Dillon et al., 2011, p. 657

*Note.* Reprinted by permission from Springer Nature.

Whether progressing through individual sexual identity development or the social identity process, sexual identity development, as demonstrated in Figure 2, consists of five statuses: compulsory heterosexuality, active exploration, diffusion, deepening and commitment, and synthesis. Transitioning out of the compulsory heterosexuality stage is considered permanent. However, individuals may move back and forth between active exploration and syntheses as they continue to develop their identity (Dillon et al., 2011).

**Figure 2**

*Processes of Sexual Identity Development*



*Source.* Dillon et al., 2011, p. 658

*Note.* Reprinted by permission from Springer Nature.

The concept of compulsory heterosexuality used by Dillon et al. (2011) is based on the term coined by Rich (1980) and applied by Mohr (2002) and describes “the presumption across societal systems that (a) heterosexuality is normal and universal and (b) women and men are innately attracted to each other emotionally and sexually” (Dillon et al., 2011, p. 659). Compulsory heterosexuality within the model applies to any individuals, regardless of sexual identity, “who accept and adopt the compulsory heterosexuality as a sexual orientation identity that is institutionalized and required by socialization in many cultures” (p. 659). Compulsory heterosexuality is often the starting point for most individuals. Dillon et al. (2011) explained that

prepubescent children who have not begun exploring sexual identity and adults who have never considered any alternative to heterosexuality would likely fall within compulsory heterosexuality. As mentioned previously, moving from the compulsory heterosexuality stage is permanent as it involves understanding and accepting that the belief that heterosexuality is innate and normal is a societal belief and not applicable. It is further explained that to move away from compulsory heterosexuality, an individual must be aware of and accept that heterosexuality maintains privilege within society and is the dominant group. Individuals who accept compulsory heterosexuality and fall within this stage do not hold an awareness or understanding that heterosexual individuals are privileged and members of the dominant social group in addition to holding the assumption that any individual they interact with are heterosexual (Dillon et al., 2011). Individuals within the compulsory heterosexuality stage are likely to perceive others as heterosexual and to hold prejudices against individuals holding sexual minority identities (Dillon et al., 2011).

Active exploration is the “purposeful exploration, evaluation, or experimentation of one’s sexual needs, values, orientation and/or preferences for activities, partner characteristics, or modes of sexual expression” (Dillon et al., 2011, p. 660). Active exploration can be conducted through either cognitive or behavioral actions. In some cases, societal beliefs may frame behavioral exploration in a negative light and impede with individuals’ ability to engage in behavioral exploration. Active exploration must be a purposeful means of exploring sexual identity in an effort to meet an established goal. Additionally, it involves actively questioning or abandoning compulsory heterosexuality. Active exploration is unique to each individual and may

vary in terms of an individual's experiences and environment. While this stage can occur at any time in an individual's life, it often first occurs when an individual reaches biological maturation or puberty. While individuals who identify as heterosexual can engage in active exploration, they often must navigate systemic homonegativity and sexual prejudice. As such, most heterosexuals who engage in active exploration only explore preferences for partner characteristics and activities. However, for individuals who are sexual minorities, they will likely engage in exploration within all aspects of their identity and enter the stage as a result of an "awareness of homoerotic feelings, behaviors, and exploration" (Dillon et al., 2011, p. 661).

Diffusion is the "absence of commitment and of systematic exploration" (Dillon et al., 2011, p. 662). There are two forms of diffusion: "diffused diffusion" and "carefree diffusion." Carefree diffusion consists of having little concern about not having strong commitments. Individuals within carefree diffusion tend to have an "I don't care" mindset towards their sexual identity development and/or exploration. While individuals within carefree diffusion may engage in exploration, it is often an open willingness to try anything versus an effort to actively explore their sexual identity. Diffused diffusion is associated with experiencing stress about not having commitments. Individuals within diffused diffusion are likely to experience distress by the lack of commitment. When in the diffusion stage, individuals are "more likely to ignore or reject social and cultural prescriptions for sexual values, behavior, and identity" (Dillon et al., 2011, p. 662).

Individuals within the stage of deepening and commitment experience an increase in their commitment to their identity (Dillon et al., 2011). Deepening and commitment can be reached with any sexual orientation. While LGB individuals almost always progress to deepening and commitment through active exploration, it is possible for heterosexual individuals to progress straight to this stage without engaging in active exploration. This is possible due to “a function of maturational changes in life experiences, cognitions, and behaviors that do not meet the criteria for active exploration” (Dillon et al., 2011, p. 663). For heterosexual individuals who have not progressed out of compulsory heterosexuality, this stage would be considered committed compulsory heterosexuality. For these individuals, heterosexist assumptions are typically maintained and strengthened. When entering the deepening and commitment stage through active exploration, individuals have an increased likelihood of questioning the societal construct of heterosexuality being the norm. In order to exit the deepening and commitment stage, there are three pathways individuals may take: 1) proceeding to synthesis, 2) engaging in further active exploration, or 3) diffusion (Dillon et al., 2011).

Within the status of synthesis, individuals begin to align their identity and beliefs with their attitudes and behaviors (Dillon et al., 2011). Within this stage, individuals see congruence between their individual identity and their social identity. This stage can be achieved by both LGB and heterosexual individuals. Within the synthesis stage, “individual sexual identity, group membership identity, and attitudes toward dominant and marginalized sexual orientation identity groups merge into an overall sexual self-concept, which is conscious, congruent, and volitional” (Dillon et

al., 2011, p. 664). When achieving synthesis, an individual is likely to blend their sexual identity with their other intersecting identities. The only way to enter synthesis is through deepening and commitment. However, individuals may exit synthesis due to various reasons, including active exploration or diffusion (Dillon et al., 2011).

### ***Experiences of Queer Students***

In a study conducted by the Association of Governing Boards (AGB), an estimated one million students and 160,000 faculty and staff at institutions of higher education in the U.S. identify as a member of the LGBTQIA community (Trammell, 2014). AGB explained that members of the LGBTQIA community maintain an expectation that institutions of higher education will protect their rights and academic opportunities (Trammell, 2014).

As a result of harassment creating difficulties performing academically and feeling part of the campus community, impacted students tend to withdraw from the institution (Sanlo & Espinoza, 2012). Researchers have had difficulties determining the number of individuals in the LGBTQIA community at institutions of higher education due to a fear of victimization from disclosing their identity (Sanlo & Espinoza, 2012). Enhancing the campus climate through increased LGBTQIA relations can promote retention, academic performance, and campus engagement (Trammell, 2014).

When it comes to sexual orientation, it is often viewed in a binary manner, either heterosexual or homosexual (Dolan, 2013; Eliason, 1997; Galupo, 2006; Horowitz & Newcomb, 1999; Roberts et al., 2015; Rust, 1995, 2000b; Zinik, 2000). Nonmonosexual students are students who are attracted to more than one gender

(Dolan, 2013; Henry, 2018; Rust, 2000a). Nonmonosexual students tend to feel erased by the societal norms and beliefs surrounding the monosexist ideals that individuals must be exclusively heterosexual or homosexual (Dolan, 2013; Eliason, 1997; Roberts et al., 2015). Dolan (2013) explained the concepts of monosexism and biphobia, stating

While heterosexism and homophobia are clearly pervasive in the United States, an often less-known oppressive influence, known as monosexism, limits the growth and development of nonmonosexual students. Often referred to as *biphobia* [originally emphasized], monosexism is a form of oppression that promotes exclusive heterosexual, lesbian, or gay male behaviors as the only legitimate concepts of sexual orientation. (p. 24)

In a patriarchal society, there is a belief that all individuals are innately heterosexual (Rich, 1980). This social construct is "... a man-made institution – compulsory heterosexuality – as if, despite profound emotional impulses and complementarities drawing women toward women, there is a mystical/biological heterosexual inclination, a 'preference' or 'choice' which draws women toward men" (Rich, 1980, p. 637). Compulsory heterosexuality leads to the raising of children in a gendered way based on their sex (Chodorow, 1997). The notion of compulsory heterosexuality appeals to and supports a patriarchal society.

**Heterosexism.** Heterosexism contributes to the oppression faced by nonmonosexual individuals (Dolan, 2013). A bias held by society that heterosexuality, or opposite-sex relationships, are normal or standard can lead to the assumption that nonmonosexual individuals are heterosexual when in a relationship with an individual

perceived to be of the opposite sex. This assumption contributes to the erasure of the queer identity held by nonmonosexual individuals (Dolan, 2013). LGBTQ individuals experience the erasure of their identities unless they actively and continuously disclose their identity (Dolan, 2013; Henry, 2018). Another caveat of monosexism, expressed both within the LGBTQ community and by heterosexual individuals, that transcends homophobia and biphobia, is the tendency for society to deem an individual as homosexual, either gay or lesbian, as a result of a single same-sex experience, ignoring any other opposite sex experiences or considering an individual's opposite sex experiences to be fraudulent or a means for hiding their homosexuality (Dolan, 2013; Eliason, 1997; Galupo, 2006; Henry, 2018; Horowitz & Newcomb, 1999; Israel & Mohr, 2008; Roberts et al., 2015; Rust, 1995, 2000b; Zinik, 2000). It is, at times, believed that individuals who are nonmonosexual are simply in a transition period to a monosexual identity or are attempting to take advantage of heterosexual privilege (Israel & Mohr, 2008; Roberts et al., 2015).

LGBTQ individuals often encounter heterosexist language, actions, and environments everyday (McCabe et al., 2013). Institutions of education, at both the secondary and postsecondary levels, can be hostile towards LGBTQ individuals. Verbal harassment is the most common form of harassment LGBTQ individuals face (McCabe et al., 2013). However, anti-LGBTQ verbal harassment is not always solely directed at LGBTQ individuals. The use of heterosexist and homophobic language has been ingrained into the development of males as a form of being masculine (Pascoe, 2011). The use of the word 'faggot' or 'fag' is often by young men toward one another in a joking manner to imply weakness or femininity. Society teaching young males

that one must always be masculine in order to be a man. If caught engaging in any action considered to not be masculine, one is at risk of being harassed for not acting how society perceives a man should. While these terms are often used in a joking way to condition males on how it is believed they should act, when directed towards queer individuals, it is almost always meant in a violent or aggressive manner (Pascoe, 2011). Encountering verbal harassment can negatively impact both the education and mental health of LGBTQ individuals (McCabe et al., 2013).

**Heteronormativity.** Heteronormativity is the assumption of heterosexuality as the innate sexual orientation of all individuals (Dillon et al., 2011; Kitzinger, 2005; McCabe et al., 2013; Rich, 1980). It promotes the belief that heterosexuality is normal and natural. Those who do not align with this belief, non-heterosexual individuals, are considered to be unnatural and a deviation from societal norms (Kitzinger, 2005; McCabe et al., 2013; Rich, 1980). However, it is important to note that heteronormativity is not necessarily a form of discrimination against LGBTQ individuals (Kitzinger, 2005; McCabe et al., 2013). It is a societal belief that reinforces heterosexuality as the normal and acceptable form of identity (McCabe et al., 2013). When it comes to heteronormativity, the “maintenance of heteronormativity is often carried out through microaggressions, defined as messages that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights directed at marginalized groups in society” (McCabe et al., 2013, p. 10). Microaggressions may be intentional or unintentional and are often everyday occurrences. The use of the word ‘gay’, ‘queer’, or ‘fag’ may be used as terms to mean ‘dumb’ or ‘stupid’ (McCabe et al., 2013; Pascoe, 2011). While these terms may not always be directed at LGBTQ individuals or with the intent of being

discriminatory, it can equate the having of a queer identity as being stupid or lacking masculinity (McCabe et al., 2013; Pascoe, 2011). A second form of microaggression toward LGBTQ individuals is refusal to accept the implications and dangers of heteronormativity and heterosexism (McCabe et al., 2013). This form of microaggression tends to be displayed by educational institutions. When institutions ignore heteronormative mindsets or when heteronormative approaches are taken towards policy development, the campus climate can be negatively impacted. As a result, institutions reinforce the societal norm of heteronormativity and further marginalize LGBTQ students (McCabe et al., 2013).

### **Multiple Identities and the Theories of Intersectionality**

Identity development is a complex process that requires attention be placed on the existence of multiple intersecting identities (Jones, 2009). Intersectionality “explicitly situates identity as multiple and layered and existing at once within systems of both oppression and privilege” (p. 289). In addition to acknowledging the multiple identities an individual may hold, it is important to consider “the sociocultural and historical contexts in which individuals develop” (p. 287). Identity is a social construct (Jones, 2009; Jones et al., 2012). With the notion that identities are socially constructed, the sociocultural and historical contexts behind the development of the identities an individual may hold must be acknowledged in order to accurately capture and understand the identities held (Jones, 2009). Self-authorship is the process an individual goes through as they develop and express their identity (Jones, 2009). Crenshaw (1991) conceptualized the having of multiple identities as the concept of intersectionality. The combination of all identities an individual may hold is

considered their core identity and their individual identities may or may not be expressed visibly (Jones, 2009; Jones & McEwen, 2000). Intersectionality provides that ability to account for multiple identities and systems of power or oppression that may contribute to an individual's experiences (Jones, 2009).

Chan's (1989) study indicated that individuals with intersecting identities encounter difficulties trying to join and feel welcome within a community that only represents one element of their identity. When only one portion of an individual's identity is represented within a group, the individual is forced to ignore the other portion of their identity. If the members of their community are not accepting of the other portions of their identity, the individual may feel unwelcome or like they are not really a member of the group they identify as (Chan, 1989). Through the concept of intersectionality, it is possible to account for and to better understand the unique and complicated experiences of individuals based on their identities and interactions with systems of inequality (Abes, 2012). Essentially, one cannot not consider identity without also acknowledging the environment and society. The environment and social context can impact the outward appearance of an individual's identity.

Intersectionality, born out of Black feminism and Critical Race Theory and one of the most important theoretical contributions to the field of women's and gender studies, is an analytical tool that enables researchers to better understand and examine the interconnectedness of and relationships between race and sex (Carbado et al., 2013; Simien, 2007).

As a theoretical perspective, intersectionality can be utilized as a means for going against "the white solipsism, heteronormativity, elitism, and ableism of

dominant power and hegemonic feminist theory” (Carastathis, 2014, p. 309). A term coined by Crenshaw (1989, 1991), intersectionality, has grown in popularity among academics (Anthias, 2012; Carastathis, 2014; Carbado et al., 2013; Cooper, 2016; Chang & Culp Jr, 2002; Dhamoon, 2010; Ferree, 2009; Gopaldas, 2013; Hankivsky, 2014; Nash, 2008; Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006; Simien, 2007; Taylor et al., 2011; Walby et al., 2012; Yuval-Davis, 2006). However, the term’s meaning has fluctuated over time and has grown to become a general term that encompasses all aspects of an individual’s identity, including race, gender, class, sexuality, privilege, and ability (Cooper, 2016; Ferree, 2009; Gopaldas, 2013; Taylor et al., 2011; Walby et al., 2012). In its origination, intersectionality was described as “the various ways race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of black women’s employment experiences” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1244). Audre Lorde (1984) described her personal experience as a Black lesbian woman and the impact of her intersecting identities, stating she felt she was “constantly being encouraged to pluck out some one aspect of [herself] and present this as the meaning whole, eclipsing or denying the other parts of self” rather than openly living and embracing the multiple intersecting identities she held, a Black lesbian feminist womxn (p. 120-121). It was explained by hooks (1981) that the Black movement was inherently sexist in that it was led by Black men who sought to be equal with White men. Additionally, the womxn’s movements were inherently racist in that they were led by White womxn who sought to be equal with White men (hooks, 1981). As such, Black womxn were forced to navigate race, gender, and class (Gopaldas, 2013). However, the experiences of Black womxn based on their intersecting identities were seen to have commonalities with other groups who

hold multiple identities that are marginalized (Gopaldas, 2013). While the term intersectionality was developed based on the experiences of Black womxn,

... these newer definitions expand the concept of intersectionality beyond race, class, and gender to include age, attractiveness, body type, caste, citizenship, education, ethnicity, height and weight assessments, immigration status, income, marital status, mental health status, nationality, occupation, physical ability, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and other naturalized – though not necessarily natural – ways of categorizing human populations. (Gopaldas, 2013, p. 91)

As such, intersectionality is a “handy catchall phrase that aims to make visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to it” (Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006, p. 187). “Intersectionality is not fixed to any particular social position. The theory can and does move” (Carbado et al., 2013, p. 307). When researching the experiences of individuals, it is important that researchers consider the intersecting identities an individual may hold and the impact those identities may have on experiences (Risman, 2004). Essentially, one must always take into consideration “multiple axes of oppression; to do otherwise presumes the whiteness of womyn, the maleness of people of color, and the heterosexuality of everyone” (Risman, 2004, p. 442).

Samuels and Ross-Sheriff (2008) present the use of intersectionality theory in two ways: traditional and nontraditional. When it comes to the traditional way of using intersectionality theory, the researcher acknowledges the many different facets of identity and avoids associating any particular experience with one aspect of identity.

In the nontraditional way of using intersectionality theory, one has the ability to consider the impact of oppressions and privileges with regard to the various identities an individual may hold. The theoretical perspective and idea of intersectionality in academic research dates to womxn of color scholars in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of the limitations that were present in the available theories regarding gender. Samuels and Ross-Sheriff (2008) explained that “intersectionality goes further to recognize that for many women of color, their feminist efforts are simultaneously embedded and woven into their efforts against racism, classism, and other threats to their access to equal opportunities and social justice” (p. 5). The first womxn’s antislavery society was formed in 1832 by Black women (Brah & Phoenix, 2004). However, it is important to acknowledge that the Seneca Falls Anti-Slavery Convention of 1848 was attended by middle class White womxn with the notable exclusion of Black womxn (Brah & Phoenix, 2004). An intersectionality perspective has increasingly been utilized by feminist scholars since the 1980s in order to better examine the association of gender with race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. (Shields, 2008).

Most individuals hold multiple marginalized identities and face some level of oppression as a result (Chang & Culp Jr, 2002). While an individual may, at times, be able to not express a particular marginalized identity publicly, they will still experience a level of oppression due to the identity they hold (Chang & Culp Jr, 2002). When it comes to intersectionality, the level of oppression an individual may experience can fluctuate depending on the environment and identities of others. Shields (2008) explained this fluctuation, stating that the experiences one encounters may vary depending on their identities. While a White lesbian may experience

oppression as a result of her sexual orientation and gender, she experiences privilege as a result of her race (Shields, 2008). As such, a queer Latinx man may encounter oppression as a result of his sexual orientation and race, but experience privilege as a result of his gender. While an individual may experience oppression in one environment, they may experience privilege and opportunity in another environment (Collins, 1990; Hankivsky, 2014; Shields, 2008).

The inclusion of ethnicity, sexual orientation, sex, gender, ability, and class should be included within intersectionality research as a means for understanding identity and inequality and that these are “interdependent and mutually constitutive” (Bowleg, 2008, p. 312). Dhamoon (2010) calls intersectionality an analytic paradigm that can be utilized as a means for better understanding society and its’ relationship with the non-White womxn. As the use and understanding of intersectionality has evolved, it has increasingly been used as an analytical tool among feminist scholars (Dhamoon, 2010). “Intersectionality is inextricably linked to an analysis of power, yet one challenge to intersectionality is its alleged emphasis on categories of identity versus structures of inequality” (Cho et al., 2013, p. 297).

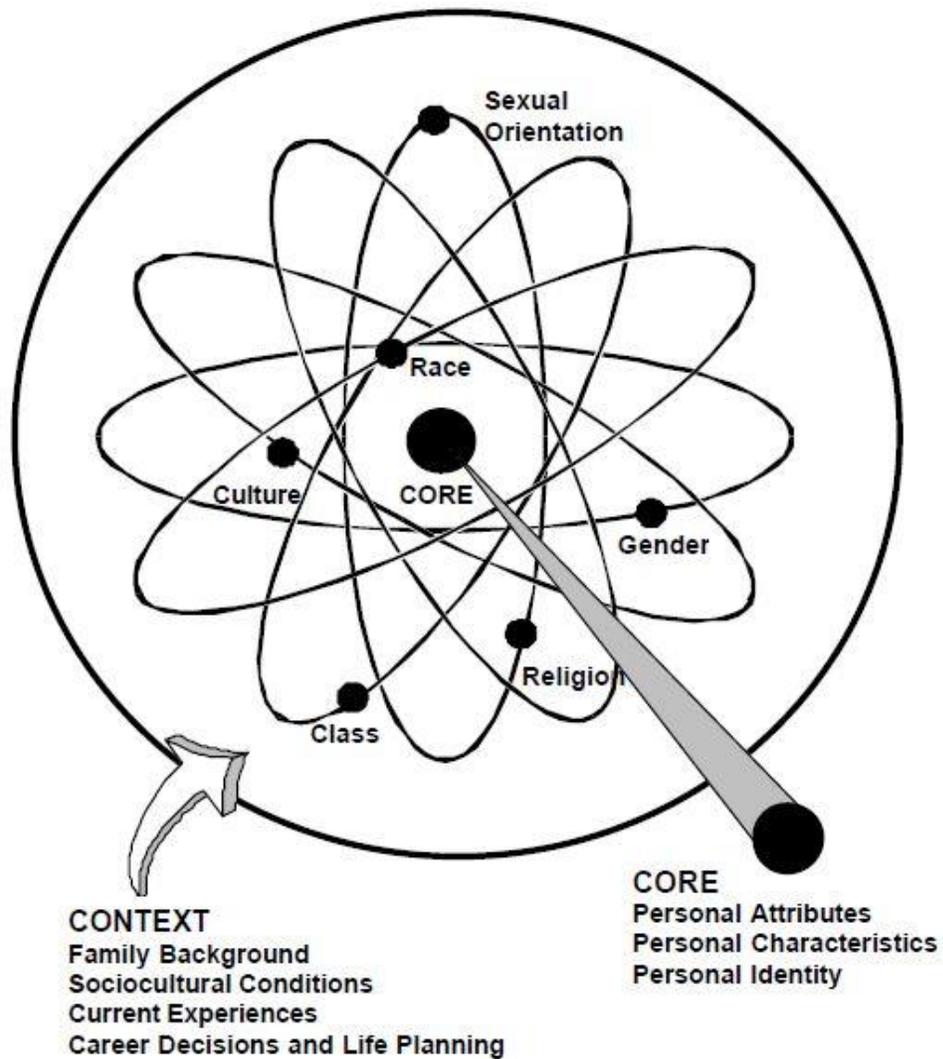
Ensuring the theoretical framework and model accurately represent the population is necessary. All individuals hold multiple identities and to not acknowledge the intersectionality of identities would lead to a misrepresentation of individuals’ experiences (Crenshaw, 1989). “Intersectionality is the systematic study of the ways in which differences such as race, gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity and other sociopolitical and cultural categories interrelate” (Fotopoulou, 2012, p. 19).

***Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity***

The Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity presents identity as an experience that is both fluid and ongoing (Jones & McEwen, 2000). An individual can possess multiple identities that are intersecting. However, while an individual may experience multiple intersecting identities, they may not display or present all of the identities that they hold. Identities such as race and gender are external, however, identities such as sexual orientation may not be readily identifiable. Expanding upon Crenshaw's (1989) and (1991) theories that an individual's experiences cannot be traced back to one single identity, Jones and McEwen (2000) present a model that shows all the identities an individual may possess circling around their personal identity or 'core identity' in the middle.

**Figure 3**

*Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity*



*Source.* Jones & McEwen, 2000, p. 409

*Note.* Reprinted by permission from Johns Hopkins University Press - Journals.

This “core identity” is often referred to as an individual’s “inner identity” due to it not being visible to others (Jones & McEwen, 2000, p. 408). The core identity consists of all identities that an individual may hold, such as gender, race, class, or sexual orientation. The “outside identities” that surround an individual’s core identity is made up of all the separate identities that an individual may hold (Jones & McEwen, 2000,

p. 408). These outside identities may not, however, be visible to others. The identities an individual hold can impact their experiences. Experiences can vary depending on what identities are displayed and the environment (Jones & McEwen, 2000).

### ***Men, Masculinity, and Love***

In her monograph *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love*, hooks (2004) looked at the experiences of men with regard to the patriarchy and how they interact with others and express their emotions. hooks (2004) broke down masculinity, explaining that men have been taught and conditioned to not express their feelings and emotions. Contributing this conditioning to the patriarchy, hooks explained that even men need to be able to experience love and to express love. Men are not only conditioned to suppress their feelings and to act in a more masculine manner by their fathers and the other men in their lives but also by females they encounter.

hooks explained that “most women do not want to deal with male pain if it interferes with the satisfaction of female desire” (2004, p. 6). Within the feminist movement, some womxn mocked men who expressed emotion in a manner of “the same disgust and contempt as sexist men” (2004, p. 6). The conditioning of men to not express emotion or vulnerability can be traced back to the patriarchy. Within a patriarchal society, men are taught that in order to be masculine, they must be closed off, tough, and not express or feel emotion or love (hooks, 2004).

hooks provided a call for action, stating:

*The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* is about our need to live in a world where women and men can belong together. Looking at the reasons patriarchy has maintained its power over men and their lives, I urge us to

reclaim feminism for men, showing why feminist thinking and practice are the only way we can truly address the crisis of masculinity today. (hooks, 2004, p. xvii)

Men, masculinity, and love took on the construct of masculinity as being conditioned by the patriarchy (hooks, 2004). It highlights the experiences often encountered by men that condition the way they present themselves. This is an important element to consider in that it provides a means for looking at the experiences of males and how they express their emotions and engage with intimacy.

hooks (2004) presented men, masculinity, and love in a way that challenges the current societal beliefs and behaviors. In order to create the will to change, men must be encouraged to self-reflect, educate themselves, and to actively accept and incorporate feedback and advice from the women in their lives. In achieving gender equality, hooks explained that it is not just the notion of womxn being equal to men, but also men being equal to womxn in the sense of being taught that it is acceptable to express emotion, be vulnerable, express yourself, and to engage in self-love (hooks, 2004). A focus on men, masculinity, and love will better assist with reframing the understanding of masculinity and encouraging self-reflection and education to empower men to feel and to express their emotion and to engage in intimate relationships without fear of compromising their masculinity.

### ***Experiences of Queer Latinx Students***

Within the United States, societal attitudes and public policies toward LGBTQIA individuals have gradually become more supportive (Eaton & Rios, 2017). A notable turning point was the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v.*

*Hodges* where the court ruled in favor of marriage equality. However, following the ruling, the U.S. saw the highest record of LGBT homicides. Additionally, in 2016, the deadliest mass shooting in the U.S. occurred, targeting LGBT individuals, those of whom were predominately Latinx (Eaton & Rios, 2017). Of the 49 victims and 53 casualties of the mass shooting at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida, 90 percent were queer Latinx individuals (Ramirez et al., 2018).

It is important to acknowledge the intersecting identities held by individuals (Eaton & Rios, 2017). Both sexuality and gender can be expressed and understood differently depending on an individual's race or ethnicity. College is often a time when individuals explore or experiment with their sexual orientation and gender identity (Dillon et al., 2011; Eaton & Rios, 2017). Queer Latinx students are forced to navigate their sexual orientation and racial/ethnic identities (Eaton & Rios, 2017). Essentially, these students are more likely to explore or experiment in college because the "increased independence in sexual and relational decision-making requires emerging adults to examine, refine, and draw upon their sexual and social identities, goals, and experiences" (Eaton & Rios, 2017, p. 458). While queer Latinx students often have systems of social support, they still encounter discrimination. For queer Latinx men, they face discrimination due to their sexual orientation and their racial/ethnic identity. Additionally, queer Latinx men face discrimination from within the Latinx community due to their sexual orientation or the queer community due to their racial or ethnic identity (Eaton & Rios, 2017; Worthen, 2018). This intragroup marginalization is when members of a marginalized group who hold more privilege (queer White men) discriminate against those who hold less privilege (queer Latinx

men) causing a feeling of not being welcomed or accepted by the community (Ramirez et al., 2018).

**Machismo.** Latinx men maintain a sense of power called machismo (Duran & Pérez II, 2019). Machismo is often related to hypermasculinity, heterosexuality (Eaton & Rios, 2017), being dominant towards womxn (Eaton & Rios, 2017; Munoz, 2017), physical courage, virility, and aggressiveness (Munoz, 2017). Additionally, it is believed that one must maintain a high level of self-sufficiency and avoid seeking help (Vogel et al., 2011). Within the Latinx culture, it is often believed that men are the individuals within the family who are the most important and influential (Munoz, 2017). Latinx men are expected to maintain control of their families and be responsible for all decision making (Munoz, 2017). Additionally, a sense of machismo pride leads Latinx men to avoid seeking out help (Salinas Jr. & Hidrowoh, 2018). Queer Latinx men often encounter discrimination from heterosexual Latinx men due to being perceived as feminine (Duran & Pérez II, 2019). As a result, queer Latinx men tend to try and pass as straight to avoid discrimination (Worthen, 2018).

**Familismo.** Additionally, the concept of familismo describes the strong familial relationship and its importance in the Latinx culture (Eaton & Rios, 2017). Familismo is broken down into three components: 1) family obligations, 2) perceived support, and 3) serving as a role model (Munoz, 2017). In addition to family obligations, respect for parents and familial elders and acting in a manner that does not bring shame upon the family are important components of familismo (Stein et al., 2019). Coming out to family members is considered to be one of the most challenging elements of sexual identity development (Munoz, 2017). However, queer Latinx men

are more likely to encounter negative reactions from family and friends regarding their sexual orientation (Duran & Pérez II, 2019; Eaton & Rios, 2017) due to a conflict with cultural values and norms (Przeworski & Piedra, 2020). These negative reactions can pose a significant impact on queer Latinx men in postsecondary education due to families being considered an important support system (Duran & Pérez II, 2019). Additionally, queer Latinx individuals are more likely to experience mental health issues, suicidal ideations and attempts, and drug use if their family responds negatively to their coming out (Munoz, 2017). As a result, queer Latinx men will often create their own families consisting of faculty, staff, and fellow students at their institution to serve as their support system (Duran & Pérez II, 2019). These chosen families provide support, assisting individuals in navigating their identities, and promote academic performance. Additionally, the forming of a family among queer students of color allows for increased support while navigating encounters with both homophobia and racism on campus. With institutions of higher education historically having been designed for White heterosexual men, queer Latinx students often encounter both racism and heterosexism within the campus climate (Duran & Pérez II, 2019). In addition to familismo, religion plays a strong role in the academic achievement of Latinx students (Salinas Jr. & Hidrowoh, 2018) and in family member's response to an individual's sexual identity (Abreu et al., 2020),

**Religion and Spirituality.** Heteronormativity is often found to be a component of religion and spirituality within the United States (Lassiter et al., 2017). This heteronormative view has often contributed to disconnect between religion and sexuality (Cravens, 2018). While biblical accounts have suggested gender and

sexuality being a spectrum, biblical interpretations have taken a heteronormative approach and placed gender and sexuality into a binary (Henderson-Espinoza, 2018). Religion and spirituality play an important role in the life and culture of all races and ethnicities (Lassiter et al., 2017). Among Latinx communities, religion serves as a resource that promotes the development of cultural identity (Lassiter et al., 2017). Within the U.S. most Latinx individuals are religious (Munoz, 2017). Most Latinx households tend to follow the Catholic or a Jesus-centered religion (Ramirez, 2018). Approximately 70 percent of Latinx individuals identify as Catholic and 23 percent identify as Protestant (Munoz, 2017). LGB Latinx individuals are still inclined to continue living in accordance to their religious or spiritual beliefs (Lassiter et al., 2017). While LGB individuals are less likely to be religious or spiritual than heterosexual individuals, LGB individuals in the Southern region of the U.S. are more likely to be religious or spiritual than LGB individual in the Northern region of the U.S. (Lassiter et al., 2017). The Southern region of the U.S., often referred to as the Bible Belt, maintains a more conservative view regarding gender and sexuality (Worthen, 2018). There is a higher likelihood of individuals in the Southern region of the U.S. holding multiple intersecting identities that reflect family, religion, and culture that shape their views towards LGBT individuals in addition to race/ethnicity (Worthen, 2018). Within the Catholic religion, the belief that marriage is between a man and womxn has been maintained (Munoz, 2017). Additionally, the Protestant religion holds the belief that marriage should be between a man and womxn and that homosexuality is a lifestyle choice (Munoz, 2017). The anti-LGBTQ stance taken by

the catholic church in addition to the church's pro-choice stance has contributed to Latinx millennials leaving the religion (Ramirez, 2018).

Younger Latinx individuals have started moving away from religion in favor of spirituality (Ramirez, 2018). Religion has often been associated with conservative views towards gender and sexuality (Worthen, 2018). Instagram is a popular social media tool that has been utilized by queer Latinx individuals to engage with others and share content on the topic of spirituality (Ramirez, 2018). These connections often provide a psychological and emotional comfort through a spiritual identity that affirms their own identity (Ramirez, 2018). Religion and spirituality play a role in the identity development of Latinx individuals (Abreu et al., 2020).

### **Identity Development**

Attending higher education contributes to changes in an individual's "cultural, intellectual, political, social, and religious values" (Worthen, 2018, p. 995). While adolescents and teens tend to hold similar views and values as their parents/guardians, moving away from home and interacting with an environment that is more diverse and offers a range of different views and values promotes the opportunity for individuals to engage in identity development (Worthen, 2018). Research has shown that students tend to experiment with various sexual and gender identities as they develop (Morgan et al., 2011). It may become potentially difficult for individuals to navigate their identities as a result of the social and political climate at their institution of higher education. This especially relates to individuals that identify as LGBTQIA. It is important for institutions of higher education to address and discuss the development of LGBTQIA students on their campuses in order to promote their safety and rights.

Institutions of higher education that ignore LGBTQIA students can potentially cause students to feel a sense of isolation and hopelessness (Morgan et al., 2011).

The literature supported the notion that when students become involved in extracurricular activities, they are more likely to experience increased development and learning (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005). Additionally, when a student becomes involved in an activity or organization that is related to their specific identity, such as race, gender, or sexuality, it provides an opportunity for them to explore their identity (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005). When Latinx students experience supportive and inclusive campus environments, they are more likely to engage in racial identity and sexual orientation identity development (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2020).

Many factors may come into play during identity development. With regards to LGBTQIA individuals, determining their sexual orientation is not the only challenge they face. Within society, LGBTQIA individuals are often considered to be second-class citizens (Dolan, 1998). While both society and institutions of higher education have come a long way in terms of progressivism since the late 1970s where LGBTQIA individuals could not be open about their identity without fear of potential repercussions, the question arises on whether the increase in visibility of LGBTQIA individuals and both sexuality and gender studies within postsecondary education have contributed to developing a “false sense of the widespread acceptability of queer theory” (Dolan, 1998, p. 42).

Ensuring the theoretical framework and model utilized in a study appropriately represent the population and guide the overall study is important. Considering the experiences of queer students, the Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development

provides an appropriate model for the process that individuals navigate through during their identity development. Individuals are more likely to explore and develop their identities during postsecondary education (Morgan et al., 2011). Dillon et al. (2011) provide a model that illustrates the process LGBTQIA students go through as they are developing their identity, navigating from compulsory heterosexuality to synthesis. As students explore and develop their identities, they may experience marginalization as a result of self-expression of their sexual orientation.

Crenshaw (1989; 1991) argued that when an individual holds multiple identities that are marginalized, they will be doubly impacted. Furthering Crenshaw's (1989; 1991) theories of intersectionality, Jones and McEwen (2000) explained that all individuals hold multiple identities, whether that particular identity is expressed or not. While an individual's core identity consists of all of their intersecting identities, their outside identity, at times, may not express their invisible identities. As a result, the impact of and their experiences based on sexual orientation can fluctuate. Examining queer Latinx men, the combination of the Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development and the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity best represent the population in order to appropriately guide the study. As the Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development examines the process queer Latinx men go through as they are exploring and navigating their sexual orientation identity and the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity accounts for the unique experiences queer Latinx men have as a result of their racial/ethnic identity and when their racial/ethnic identity intersects with their queer identity.

Holding an identity of male, individuals would be a member of the dominant group in society. However, having an external identity of being Latinx may result in the individual becoming marginalized and muted by the dominant group. As individuals explore their sexual orientation, when expressing their identity externally, they may become marginalized by being a member of a group that is not holding the power within society. With intersecting identities, queer Latinx men, at times, individuals may be doubly marginalized by holding and expressing multiple identities that are not dominant and are marginalized within society.

In order to promote student development, it is important for students to have access to support and resources that align with the identities they hold and that validate their experiences (Dolan, 2013; Erikson, 1980). During the identity development and coming out process, many LGBT individuals report losing the support of their family and friends (Galupo, 2006). Additionally, LGBTQ men are more likely to experience negative reactions than LGBTQ womxn (Galupo, 2006; Herek & Capitano, 2002; Herek, 2002). Institutions must meet students where they are in their identity develop, recognizing and affirming the experiences a student may have had (Dolan, 2013).

Entering postsecondary education, students often have not had the opportunity to develop their own sense of identity and beliefs (Hurtado et al., 1998). Students enter holding the beliefs and identities that were shaped by their families, community, and their religions. Institutions of higher education must recognize that students enter with these identities and beliefs and that they are important to the growth and development of the students (Hurtado et al., 1998). With the experiences of incoming students in a

constant state of change, institutions of higher education are forced to evolve and adapt in order to best fit the needs of students (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011). LGBTQIA individuals tend to wait to “come out” until they are in college (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Lewis & Ericksen, 2016; Miller, 2008; Mobley & Johnson, 2015). This can be due to moving to a location that may be more accepting or learning more about the LGBTQIA community through meeting other individuals (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011). Additionally, LGBTQIA students may opt to wait due to concerns for safety, the environment, or lack of role models (Lewis & Ericksen, 2016). LGBTQIA students tend to view the campus climate at institutions of higher education as unwelcoming due to having experienced some form of harassment (Taylor, 2015). The campus climate at institutions of higher education can have an impact on students’ academic performance and their level of participation on campus (Tetreault et al., 2013).

### **Campus Climate**

The campus racial climate and campus racial culture both impact the experiences of Latinx students (Kiyama et al., 2015). The campus racial climate is “the overall racial environment of the [postsecondary education] campus” (Solórzano et al., 2000, p. 62). Campus racial culture is the

Collective patterns of tacit values, beliefs, assumptions, and norms that evolve from an institution’s history and are manifest in its mission, traditions, language, interactions, artifacts, physical structures, and other symbols, which differentially shape the experiences of various racial and ethnic groups and can function to oppress racial minority populations within a particular institution. (Museus et al., 2012, p. 32)

Instances of racism and hate crimes can impact the overall campus racial climate (Kezar et al., 2018). Latinx students often encounter hostile environments at institutions of higher education through prejudice and discrimination, stereotypes, exclusion, and low expectations being held by faculty (Kiyama et al., 2015). These experiences can lead to an increase in marginalization and lower rates of academic performance, student engagement, and retention. When the campus culture promotes an environment that is holistic, supporting, and inclusive institutions of higher education will see higher levels of sense of belonging and academic performance among Latinx students (Kiyama et al., 2015). Students are more likely to invest time and energy and engage with the campus environment both cognitively and personally when they perceive the campus climate to be positive (Laird et al., 2007). When students are actively engaged, they will often perceive their institution as both inclusive and affirming (Laird et al., 2007). Both the campus racial climate and campus racial culture must be taken into account in order to fully understand the experiences of Latinx students (Kiyama et al., 2015).

Campus climate varies from institution to institution (Hurtado et al., 1998). In some cases, the campus climate may be considered ‘intangible,’ being directly related with how students, faculty, and administrators perceived the campus climate based on racial and ethnic diversity and their experiences based on their own racial and ethnic identities and their interactions with others. Campus climate at institutions of higher education does not solely refer to diversity (Hurtado et al., 1998). Campus climate is defined as “the cumulative attitudes, behaviors, and standards of employees and students concerning access for, inclusion of, and level of respect for individual and

group needs, abilities, and potential” (Rankin, 2005, p. 17). Campus climate is the impact of both external and internal forces on the experiences of students, faculty, staff, and administrators on campus (Hurtado et al., 1998). External forces include governmental policies and programs and society. Internal forces are institutional based. Both internal and external forces are connected and influenced by each other (Hurtado et al., 1998).

Campus climate can be perceived in many different ways, depending on a student’s identity (Rankin, 2006). LGBTQIA students tend to consider their campus climate to be more hostile than non-LGBTQIA students (Rankin, 2005). Students who identify as LGBTQIA may experience harassment or violence, and other subtler forms of exclusion and discrimination (Rankin, 2005). A national study on the experiences of LGBTQIA students (Kosciw et al., 2016) reported that over 80 percent of LGBTQIA students have experienced some form of harassment (Dzurick, 2018). Instances of harassment negatively impact LGBTQIA students, leading to missing classes and lower grades (Dzurick, 2018; Lewis & Ericksen, 2016). The 2013 GLSEN *National School Climate Survey* found that over half of all LGBTQIA experienced some form of harassment at school (Brown, 2016). The study found that LGBTQIA students of color were at a higher risk of experiencing some form of harassment based on their LGBTQIA identity and their racial identity (Brown, 2016; Lewis & Ericksen, 2016). LGBTQIA individuals have a higher risk of experiencing mental health problems as a result of distress that may develop from experiences related to identity development, harassment, and oppression when compared to their heterosexual and cis gendered peers (Kulick et al., 2017).

Marginalization is experienced differently by everyone, especially when accounting for multiple intersecting identities (Kulick et al., 2017). The 2007 National School Climate Survey found that approximately “80% of students of color reported hearing homophobic remarks in school and 60% reported being verbally harassed because of their gender expression” (Majied, 2010, p. 156). LGBTQIA students of color have been found to avoid coming out as LGBTQIA and often experienced both internal and external difficulties with their intersecting identities (Majied, 2010). Facing discrimination on campus and within the classroom environment may impact students’ ability to learn and engage with the environment (Garvey et al., 2015). Adverse campus and academic environments may lead to a decrease in retention and matriculation at postsecondary institutions (Garvey et al., 2015). The National Climate Survey found that 23 percent of LGBTQIA students experienced harassment compared to 12 percent of heterosexual students (Rankin et al., 2010). Of the LGBTQIA respondents, 66 percent of gay students reported experiencing derogatory remarks, 53 percent of lesbians reported being excluded, and 44 percent of queer students reported being stared at. The study found that 39 percent of transmasculine respondents, 38 percent of transfeminine respondents, and 315 of gender non-confirming respondents reported experiencing harassment on campus (Rankin et al., 2010).

Harper and Hurtado (2007) found that students of color also reported higher levels of dissatisfaction with the campus climate. Students with intersecting identities face additional challenges (Poynter & Washington, 2005). Racial identity can pose an impact on the development of additional identities, such as gender and sexual

orientation. The National Climate Survey found that students of color "were ten times more likely to indicate racial profiling as a form of harassment when compared with White respondents" (Rankin et al., 2010, p. 11). Additionally, LGBTQIA students of color reported race as the primary reason for harassment they experienced on campus. Campus climate can pose an important factor in "personal, emotional, academic, and professional development" (Rankin et al., 2010, p. 11).

As a result of the increased harassment LGBTQIA students of color experience, LGBTQIA students of color have a higher prevalence of suicide attempts when compared to White LGBTQIA students (Brown, 2016). Additionally, LGBTQIA students of color have lower retention rates, experience higher levels of harassment and discrimination within their families and communities and have a higher risk of experiencing depression (Brown, 2016).

National studies have found that there is a high rate of depression among LGBTQIA students, ranging between 10 to 20 percent, and an even higher rate for LGBTQIA students of color (Kulick et al., 2017). While, at times, it is considered that postsecondary education and mental health issues go hand in hand, a combination of minority stress, racial battle fatigue, systemic marginalization, and complex trauma all contribute to a higher level of mental health issues for marginalized students, such as LGBTQIA students of color. Kulick et al. (2017) found that when looking at rates of depression and negative experiences among students, separated by race, African American/Black and Chicana(o)/Latina(o)/Hispanic students reported higher rates than White students. Asian/Asian American students reported the least occurrences. However, accounting for the intersectionality of identities, it was found that the

majority of LGBTQ microaggressions experienced by persons of color were combined with or stemmed from racial microaggressions. Respondents reported experiencing microaggressions regarding their sexual orientation from other persons of color, “communicating exclusion” as a result of both their race and sexual orientation (Kulick et al., 2017, p. 1135). Taking into account institutional support and policies, feelings of harassment and lack of support were reported (Kulick et al., 2017). LGBTQIA students at institutions of higher education potentially “fear for their physical safety, hide or conceal their sexual identity, and feel that discussing their sexual and gender identities to faculty and staff may have aversive consequences” (Garvey et al., 2015, p. 530). LGBTQIA individuals tend to have a high probability of being victimized at some point in their life (Bradbury et al., 2016). The victimization experienced by LGBTQIA individuals can lead to decreased life satisfaction (Bradbury et al., 2016).

In addition to experiences of microaggressions and discrimination increasing the potential for mental health issues in the LGBTQIA community, LGBTQIA students may have a decrease in academic performance (Bradbury et al., 2016). This can lead to poor grades and low retention rates. Approximately a third of LGBTQIA students consider transferring to a different institution of higher education (Garvey et al., 2015).

Even with online campaigns for LGBTQIA youth, such as the “It Gets Better” campaign, many LGBTQIA individuals reported encountering some form of discrimination in the school environment (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011). The *2009 National School Climate Survey*, conducted by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight

Education Network, found that 89 percent of student respondents have “heard the word ‘gay’ used in a negative way at school and 72% heard other anti-gay remarks” (p. 1160). Beemyn and Rankin (2011) added that of the students participating in the study, “19% had been physically assaulted because of their sexual identity and 13% because of their gender expression” (p. 1160).

Experiencing forms of harassment and discrimination within school can impact academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being (Kosciw et al., 2016). The *2015 National School Climate Survey* found that experiencing discrimination or harassment as a result of one’s sexual identity or gender identity increased the likelihood of receiving a low GPA, not attending postsecondary education, and depression (Kosciw et al., 2016).

Attitudes on tolerance and acceptance held by LGBTQIA individuals can be impacted by their experiences while at an institution of higher education (Sevecke et al., 2015). In 2007, the FBI reported approximately 1,500 hate crimes against members of the LGBTQIA community (Hans et al., 2012). Between the years of 1982 and 2001, acceptance of homosexuality in the U.S. increased from 34 percent to 52 percent (Hans et al., 2012). In addition to experiencing higher levels of harassment at an institution of higher education, LGBTQIA students experience the three components described in Tinto’s 1993 student departure model: difficulty, adjustment, and isolation (Sanlo & Espinoza, 2012).

In addition to facing discrimination from the attitudes and behaviors of other individuals, LGBTQIA individuals also face potential discrimination at institutions of higher education due to “a lack of LGBTQ programming and resources” (Garvey et

al., 2015, p. 529). If students face discrimination in the classroom environment, it can have a negative impact on their ability to learn. When facing a negative learning environment, womxn, students of color, and LGBTQIA students are less likely to be retained at the institution and less likely to persist in their education (Garvey et al., 2015).

### **Perceived Experience**

While student satisfaction is an important component of academic performance and retention, the literature explained that satisfaction among marginalized students, such as LGBTQIA students, due to the higher risk of not graduating (Garvey & Kurotsuchi, 2012). LGBTQIA students may feel unrepresented on their campus due to sometimes being considered as part of the “other” group (Toynton, 2007). LGBTQIA students that had a higher level of interaction with faculty and staff at institutions of higher education were more likely to have higher academic performance and satisfaction (Garvey & Kurotsuchi, 2012).

The experiences of students while on campus can contribute to their success and performance at the institution (Davis, 1994). When students of color have a sense of belonging amongst the campus, higher levels of satisfaction and academic performance can be seen (Newman et al., 2015). Perceptions of an institution’s willingness to support students of color can have a negative impact on identity development (Scott et al., 2013). Students of color tend to have a higher level of academic performance when taught by instructors of a minority identity. However, students in low-income areas or in areas consisting mainly of racial or ethnic minorities tend to be taught by instructors that are underqualified (Scott et al., 2013).

## **Institutional Diversity and Support**

LGBTQIA students at institutions of higher education began seeing an increase in support in the 1970s (Clawson, 2014). A combination of events helped promote the support LGBTQIA individuals were receiving. The APA removed homosexuality from the DSM as a mental health condition and the creation of Student Affairs allowed a focus to be placed on campus diversity at institutions of higher education (Clawson, 2014). When it comes to institutions of higher education, student affairs professionals encountered many biases (Harley et al., 2002). These biases ranged from failing to confront homophobic remarks or actions to non-inclusive language or not creating an open and accepting environment (Harley et al. 2002).

The seminal documents for the field of Student Affairs outline the responsibilities of postsecondary institutions. The ACPA (n.d.) explained that overall, "higher education has a duty to help students reach their full potential" (p. 2). Academic learning is not the sole responsibility of higher education, but also the personal development of the whole student (ACPA, 1996). Personal development often occurs outside the classroom within the campus environment (ACPA, 1996). It is necessary for institutions to make an intentional effort to provide support for LGBTQIA students of color (Chan et al., 2017). LGBTQIA organizations and offices may provide support for LGBTQIA students, however, LGBTQIA students of color often report feeling excluded from utilizing the resources due to intersecting identities (Chan et al., 2017).

While it is explained that LGBTQIA individuals at institutions of higher education have changing needs, one method institutions have attempted to assist

students is by creating safe environments and providing training to allies (Ryan et al., 2013). Through these trainings, institutions of higher education provided faculty and staff with the ability to hear from LGBTQIA individuals on what their needs are and some of the various forms of discrimination they encounter on campuses. The purpose of ally trainings is to educate the campus community on the needs of LGBTQIA students and on the forms of discrimination LGBTQIA students often encounter. Additionally, institutions of higher education have the ability to partner with organizations such as Campus Pride and The Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals in order to offer better resources to the campus (Ryan et al., 2013).

LGBTQIA students tend to view the campus climate at institutions of higher education as unwelcoming due to having experienced some form of harassment (Taylor, 2015). In an effort to develop more inclusive campuses, institutions of higher education are recommended to incorporate some form of ally or Safe Zone for faculty and staff in order to better provide support for LGBTQIA students. Additionally, workshops for the campus community should place a focus on addressing and preventing “heteronormative assumptions” from being presented in lectures or assignments (Taylor, 2015, p. 62).

Elmhurst College, a religious based institution affiliated with the United Church of Christ, was recognized by Campus Pride for becoming the first institution in the United States to ask LGBTQIA identification questions on their admissions application (Lorenzetti, 2012). Prior to including questions on the admissions application, the admissions office worked with the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) to

learn more about perceptions of support from the institution and what they could do better to provide more support for LGBTQIA students. Through these discussions, the admissions office determined that they could better assist students by directing relevant resources directly to students by capturing particular demographic questions, such as LGBTQIA identity. While the admissions office experienced a negative reaction from some members of the community, the admissions office explained that the purpose of the questions was to aid in student transition to the institution and to enable the institution to better provide support to students based on research suggesting that additional resources may enhance the academic performance of LGBTQIA students (Lorenzetti, 2012).

Institutions of higher education may see a benefit from developing and incorporating resources, such as GSAs and LGBTQIA Resource Centers (Worthen, 2014). These resources can be beneficial to LGBTQIA students and to the overall campus climate in that they promote education about LGBTQIA issues and encourage activism at institutions of higher education (Worthen, 2014). It is important for institutions to incorporate inclusive statements into mission statement and institutional policies (Jones, 2014).

When considering students based solely on race or gender, there is often a support network of family or friends that a student can turn to (Jones, 2014). However, for LGBTQIA students, many times, there is not a support network. LGBTQIA students of color are at a higher disadvantage if they do not have a support network to turn to when encountering racist and homophobic encounters. Through the increased development of LGBTQIA organizations, departments, institutional diversity

initiatives, and institutional policies, postsecondary institutions may see an improved campus climate (Jones, 2014). The ACLU (2016) reported that only 20 states in the U.S. maintain laws that prohibit sexual orientation-based harassment and discrimination.

### **Minority Serving Institutions**

Within the U.S., MSIs educate a large percentage of both underrepresented students and low-income students (John & Stage, 2014). It is estimated that the number of Black and Asian students enrolling in postsecondary education by 2021 will increase by 20 percent and by 42 percent for Hispanic students. Compared to PWIs, MSIs graduate a higher rate of minority students. The goal of MSIs are “educating underrepresented students, providing cultural academic programs, and serving their communities” (John & Stage, 2014, p. 66). The number of postsecondary institutions classified as an MSI by the U.S. Department of Education increased from 414 in the 1980 to over 1,200 in the early 2000s (Flores & Park, 2015). The U.S. Department of Commerce Office of Civil Rights (2011) estimated there are approximately 575 MSIs in the U.S. Of the 575 MSIs, the U.S. Department of Commerce Office of Civil Rights (2011) approximated 78 are AANAPISIs, 356 are HSIs, 105 are HBCUs, and 36 are TCUs. In 2019, there were 523 HSIs in the U.S. (Garcia et al., 2019).

Historically, campus climate has been impacted by the school segregation (Hurtado et al., 1998). Desegregation of schools has had an impact on postsecondary education. Institutions of higher education have a history of resistance to desegregation.

The best example is resistance to desegregation in communities and specific campus settings, the maintenance of old campus policies at predominantly White institutions that best serve a homogeneous population, and attitudes and behaviors that prevent interaction across race and ethnicity. Because they are embedded in the culture of a historically segregated environment, many campuses sustain longstanding, often unrecognized, benefits for particular student groups. (Hurtado et al., 1998, p. 283)

One of the goals of desegregation was to change the racial and ethnic dynamic of schools and to increase access and equity to education. In order to fully desegregate postsecondary education, extended legal litigation in order to “require institutions to accept their obligation to serve equitably a more diverse group of students” (p. 284). White students who have attended desegregated schools have reported holding fewer racial stereotypes and racial and ethnic based hostilities and biases. MSIs, such as HBCUs, HSIs, and AICs were established with the purpose of serving students who were historically excluded from postsecondary education. These MSIs “not only represent alternative choices for students but also include attention to the cultural and academic development of these students and their communities as part of their mission” (p. 282). African American students have reported perceiving higher levels of institutional support and sense of belonging at HBCUs. When institutions focus on establishing campus environments that are student centered, racial tensions on campus will decrease (Hurtado et al., 1998). However, at PWIs, marginalized students often encounter barriers that impede their engagement as a result of a negative campus climate (Laird et al., 2007). Unlike HBCUs and TCUs which were established to serve

specific populations of students, HSIs developed due to a shift in student demographics and are also PWIs (Lara, 2017; Villarreal, 2014).

### ***Hispanic Serving Institutions***

HSIs are commonly recognized as institutions that maintain an enrollment of at least 25 percent of all students that identify as Hispanic (Benitez, 1998; Garcia et al., 2019). The 1965 version of HEA provided federal funding for two types of institutions that were minority serving. These institutions were HSIs and HBCUs. Two groups that provided support for the development of HSIs were the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. These groups helped to define HSIs as “accredited degree-granting public or private non-profit institutions of higher education with at least 25 percent Hispanic student enrollment” (Benitez, 1998, p. 60).

Authorized in 1998, Title V established competitive support for HSIs (Brown et al., 2003). The U.S. Department of Education operated under the belief that by providing additional financial support to HSIs, institutions would be able to better serve the needs of Hispanic students (Brown et al., 2003). Of all Hispanic students enrolled in postsecondary education, approximately 50 percent attend an HSI (Dayton et al., 2004). Of HSIs, approximately 53 percent are two-year institutions and 47 percent are four-year institutions. The official recognition of HSIs was accomplished with the support of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU; Brown et al., 2003). HACU’s mission was “to improve educational access and raise the quality of college opportunities for Latinos” (Brown et al., 2003, p. 30). The literature explained that the development of HSIs differed from that of HBCUs and

TCUs (Brown et al., 2003). HSIs tend to not be the result of a long-term commitment to Latinx students (Laird et al., 2007). Unlike HBCUs and tribal colleges and universities, HSIs were not developed with the sole intent of providing support to Hispanic students, they “evolved due to their geographic proximity to Latino populations” (Brown et al., 2003, p. 30). As such, while HBCUs and TCUs were established with the purpose of serving particular populations of students, HSIs are typically PWIs that have an enrollment of at least 25 percent of Hispanic undergraduate students (Lara, 2017; Villarreal, 2014). It is important to emphasize that unlike HCBUs and TCUs, HSIs are usually also PWIs.

Many HSIs do not have mission statements that mention providing support for Hispanic students (Laden, 2001). These institutions felt the need to develop support for Hispanic students as a result of the increased enrollment (Laden, 2001). However, an institution’s mission can have an impact on campus culture (Villarreal, 2014). The campus culture can be shaped by the institution’s “history – the college’s original mission, its religious or ethnic heritage, and the circumstances under which the institution was founded” (Kuh & Whitt, 1988, p. 45). Contreras et al. (2008) found in a survey of ten HSIs in California, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, and New York that none of the institutions mentioned the HSI designation or Latinx support within their mission statement.

Agee (2002) stated that “histories of settings are crucial in understanding existing structures, discourses, and subjectivities” (p. 578). As a result, it is important to look at the experiences of queer Latinx men at HSIs. Both the campus racial climate and campus racial culture of institutions of higher education impact student experience

and academic performance (Kiyama et al., 2015). While an institution may hold a designation as an HSI, the institution's history, traditions, monuments, or building names could impact student experience and how the campus climate is perceived (Kezar et al., 2018; Kiyama et al., 2015; Museus et al., 2012). Additionally, the surrounding environment can impact a student's perceptions. Historical monuments, traditions, or names either on campus or within the community that have a historically racist background can negatively impact student experience and perceptions of acceptance. The presence of these may lead students to believe the climate is inherently against them and that the institution and community continue to support the historical practices and actions (Kezar et al., 2018; Kiyama et al., 2015; Museus et al., 2012). While an institution's history may vary, understanding the institutional history and campus climate of an institution is necessary in order to obtain the full picture of student experience. Research on this topic will better aid postsecondary institutions in developing support programs that will challenge the lower rates of academic performance and retention. Through using a narrative qualitative approach, this research will provide an understanding of how this population of students interact with the campus environment, how they perceive the campus climate, and what impact their interaction and perceptions have on their performance and overall outcomes.

The most common type of HSIs are public two-year institutions (Benitez, 1998). Two-year institutions are often considered to be "gateways to higher education" for Hispanic students (Núñez et al., 2011, p. 19). Additionally, most HSIs are less expensive and tend to be closer to home for many Hispanic students (Benitez, 1998). In 1997, the U.S. Department of Education found that Hispanic students

enrolled at HSIs had a higher completion rate than Hispanic students enrolled at PWIs. The U.S. Department of Education explained that approximately 47 percent of associate degrees and 48 percent of bachelor's degrees awarded at HSIs were awarded to Hispanic students (Benitez, 1998).

Explaining common elements among Hispanic students enrolled in postsecondary education, Brown et al., (2003) stated that students were often: First-generation college students, low-income, less academically prepared, and enrolled in two-year institutions. It was found that over 50 percent of all Hispanic students enrolled in postsecondary education were located within either California or Texas. The remaining percentage of Hispanic students were enrolled among the over 200 remaining HSIs in the United States. It was found that when there is a sense of community and a supportive environment, Hispanic students tend to be more successful and feel included as a member of the community (Brown et al., 2003).

When there is a Hispanic-centered approach taken at an HSI by the faculty and administration, Hispanic students tend to see positive outcomes (Laird et al., 2007). Latinx students at HSIs that have supportive and inclusive environments tend to experience racial identity and sexual orientation identity development (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2020). HSIs tended to develop programs with a holistic approach (Laird et al., 2007) and various academic support programs for Hispanic students with the intention of increasing retention rates and graduation rates (Laden, 2001). In addition to having academic support programs geared towards Hispanic students, having faculty and administrators who are Hispanic can promote higher levels of engagement and academic success among Hispanic students (Laird et al., 2007). Latinx faculty

often serve as academic and emotional support and as mentors to Latinx students (Villarreal, 2014). It has been found that at postsecondary institutions within the U.S., approximately 80 percent of all faculty and administrators identify as White with approximately five percent identifying as Hispanic (Rudick et al., 2017). By having an overwhelming majority of faculty and administrators who identify as White can create a sense of isolation and negative perceptions of the campus climate by Hispanic students (Rudick et al., 2017).

The student population within higher education has seen a growth in the enrollment of Latinx students (Marin & Pereschica, 2017). To obtain a classification as an HSI, the Department of Education requires institutions of higher education to maintain an enrollment of at least 25% of students who identify as Hispanic. The majority of HSIs are community colleges. However, the number of four-year institutions obtaining the status of an HIS has increased over the years. The majority of research on HSIs has focused on under-funded institutions. However, as more research focused institutions, such as Research 1, see an increase in the enrollment of Hispanic students, it is important for research to consider the unique experiences of these students (Marin & Pereschica, 2017). In 2007, presidents and chancellors of HSIs reported their number one challenge was lack of funding followed by academic preparedness and retention (de los Santos Jr & Cuamea, 2010). Marin and Perschica (2017) found that lack of funding continues to be a challenge for HSIs.

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU; 2019b) reported 523 postsecondary institutions in the U.S. met the U.S. Department of Education's requirements for being an HSI in 2017. Table 4 shows the total percent of

all undergraduate Hispanic students, number of HSIs, and number of emerging HSIs in the Southern region of the U.S. during the 2017-2018 academic year reported by HACU (2019a).

**Table 4**

*State by State Comparison of HSIs during the 2017-2018 Academic Year*

<b>State</b>	<b>Total Percent of all Undergraduate Hispanic Students</b>	<b>Total Number of HSIs</b>	<b>Total Number of Emerging HSIs</b>
Alabama	3.8%	0	0
Arkansas	6.3%	0	0
Delaware	9.6%	0	0
Florida	28.2%	25	32
Georgia	8.0%	2	2
Kentucky	3.9%	0	0
Louisiana	5.5%	1	1
Mississippi	2.4%	0	0
North Carolina	8.3%	1	6
Oklahoma	9.4%	2	2
South Carolina	4.9%	0	1
Tennessee	4.7%	0	1
Texas	39.2%	93	46
Virginia	8.9%	0	2
West Virginia	6.2%	0	0

*Source.* HACU, 2019a

*Note.* States presented in alphabetical order.

While HSIs are considered an MSI, they differ from the other institutional types. Most HSIs were not established with the mission of serving Latinx students (Marin & Pereschica, 2017). HSIs tend to develop as a result of a shift in student population enrolling at an institution rather than a focus being placed on serving Latinx students (Marin & Pereschica, 2017) and tend to also be PWIs (Lara, 2017; Villarreal, 2014). However, HSIs are beneficial in that they provide increased access and opportunity for Latinx students who traditionally come from low SES backgrounds, are first-generation students, and tend to be less academically prepared (Villarreal, 2014). As

such, HSIs have been found to enable Latinx students to overcome the barriers they often face within postsecondary education (Lara, 2017). Although, if institutional administrators do not actively engage in student success efforts for Latinx students, the benefits of an HSI will not be achieved (Lara, 2017).

### **Policy**

Within higher education, the responsibility of developing protections for gender identities and sexual orientation tends to be placed upon the individual institutions. When looking at federal regulations that provide protections for gender identities and sexual orientation, Title IX tends to be the most inclusive. The U.S. Department of Education does allow institutions of higher education to seek an exemption from following Title IX regulations. Of institutions seeking an exemption, the majority are religious institutions (Rockenbach et al., 2016). Rockenbach et al. (2016) explained that the “policy exemptions were requested with regard to issues of ‘admissions, behavioral rules, housing, access to restrooms, athletic participation and more’” (p. 498).

With regard to the impact of policies that discriminate against LGBTQIA students, the *2015 National School Climate Survey* found that 81.6 percent LGBTQIA respondents felt that their school had a discriminatory policy in place (Kosciw et al., 2016). It was reported that 29.8 percent of LGBTQIA respondents were disciplined due to public displays of affection, 16.7 percent were not permitted to include LGBTQIA related topics in their assignments, 3.5 percent were disciplined for identifying as LGBTQIA, and 14.1 percent were restricted from forming a GSA (Kosciw et al., 2016).

When looking at the perceptions of LGBTQIA students of their campus environment at institutions of higher education, the literature explained that campus environments tend to be hostile environments (Rockenbach et al., 2016). This is due to the “homophobia transphobia, heterosexism, and cisgenderism” LGBTQIA students tend to encounter (Rockenbach et al., 2016, p. 501). Robinson and Spivey (2011) explained that impactful actions an institution can take to show their support and commitment toward LGBTQIA students “is to include the terms ‘sexual orientation,’ ‘gender identity,’ and ‘gender expression’ in campus-wide equal opportunity policies” (p. 1306). When institutions do not include inclusive language within their campus-wide equal opportunity policies, the potential for negative occurrences develops. The potential impact includes LGBTQIA students becoming “vulnerable to discrimination,” denying LGBTQIA students the ability to raise concerns, and it may “signal to members of the campus that anti-LGBTQ behavior is tolerable or even acceptable, encouraging discrimination” (Robinson & Spivey, 2011, p. 1306).

### **Research Questions**

This study was conducted to examine the experiences of students who identify as queer Latinx men at a designated HSI in the Southwest region of the U.S. The primary research question was:

- How do the intersecting identities of sexuality, race, and gender impact the campus experiences of queer Latinx men within Hispanic Serving Institutions?

The secondary questions were:

- In what ways have attending an HSI promoted or hindered identity development for queer Latinx men?

- What are the institutional resources queer Latinx men utilize at HSIs?

### **Summary**

The needs and expectations of students are regularly changing, forcing institutions of higher education to evolve to better meet the needs of students and establish a more inclusive environment. While some postsecondary institutions have worked to become more inclusive and accepting campuses, a 2003 study found that approximately one third of queer students had experienced some form of harassment or discrimination. With campus climate playing an important factor in campus engagement and academic performance for both queer students and Latinx students, institutional diversity and support for queer Latinx men is an important component.

With the U.S. population predicted to increase to three out of ten people being of Latinx heritage and 25 percent of secondary school students identifying as Latinx by 2030, the literature raised concerns regarding the rate of enrollment for Latinx students not increasing proportionally. While the U.S. Department of Education reported an increase in the national enrollment of Latinx students, over 50 percent of all Latinx students are enrolled in one of the approximately 200 HSIs, with 53 percent being two-year institutions. Through the efforts of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, recognition of and funding for Hispanic Serving Institutions were accomplished through Titles III and V of the *Higher Education Act*.

While many Latinx students continue to face barriers, ranging from family or the cost of attendance to being a First-Generation College Student, the U.S. Department of Education reported that a higher percentage of Latinx students that

enroll at HSIs graduate than those that enroll at PWIs. In an effort to provide support to the increasing number of Latinx students enrolling at postsecondary institutions, many institutions began developing various academic support programs. Through the combination of resources and institutional funding, postsecondary education may potentially see a rise in enrollment by Latinx students.

In order to provide a safe and inclusive campus climate, institutions of higher education must be knowledgeable of the needs of queer students, Latinx men, and those with intersecting identities. Failure to consider and address the needs of these students may lead to increases in isolation, hopelessness, and lower rates of retention. The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of queer Latinx men at an HSI in the Southwest region of the U.S. Through the findings of this study, it is hoped to provide policy recommendations and strategies to enhance the overall experience and academic performance of queer Latinx men at HSIs.

### CHAPTER III

#### **Rationale for Methodology**

While the study utilized a qualitative research approach, a narrative inquiry was the methodology used to answer the research questions. According to Creswell (2014), a narrative inquiry is utilized as a means for studying “the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives” (p. 13). While a case study approach could provide valuable insight, using a narrative approach would provide greater insight into the experiences of queer Latinx men, the institutional services and resources they utilize, and their perception of institutional support and resources based on their identity. A narrative approach will provide more detailed insight into the experiences of the individuals, what resources and programs they are aware of and actively utilize, why they utilize or do not utilize particular resources, and why they hold particular perceptions or beliefs about the institution and the institution’s motivations towards becoming an HSI. Additionally, a narrative approach will present an opportunity for respondents to discuss the identities they hold and how they actively navigate identity development and campus environment based on the identities they hold. In terms of this study, participants were asked to provide stories of their experiences based on their intersecting identities as queer Latinx men at an HSI.

Lichtman (2013) described qualitative research as a method for answering research questions through systematic investigation using verbal communication. Interviews were conducted in order to gain insight into the why behind the numbers. Eleven interviews were conducted. The interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes.

The semi-structured interviews provided an increased ability to obtain insight into the experiences of queer Latinx men, the barriers and challenges experienced, and the resources utilized at designated HSIs. Due to logistic reasons, the institution was selected by using the researcher's institution and recruiting participants who met specific inclusion criteria.

### **Context of Study**

The focus of this study was on a public four-year HSI in the Southwest region of the U.S. While any institution receiving money from the federal government must follow certain policies and laws, private and faith-based institutions have the ability to receive exemptions that will allow discrimination or exclusion of some disenfranchised populations. As such, private and faith-based institutions were not included in this study. Experiences of students can vary depending on the size and type of institution and the locations of the institution. While the researcher's institution was used for logistical reasons, in an effort to narrow the population size from all queer students or all queer Latinx students, a focus was placed on the experiences of queer Latinx men.

### **Data Sources and Collection Methods**

The data sources for this study included interviews with queer Latinx men at a public four-year HSI in the Southwest region of the U.S. A call for participants was shared with the selected institution's LGBTQIA office, Women's and Gender Studies program, individual departments within the selected institution's division of diversity, and through the selected institution's announcement listserv. Appendix B shows the call for participants that was used. Email announcements included a summary of the

study and a call for participants. All calls for participants announcements included a summary of the study and a link for interested participants to access the screening form on Qualtrics. Prior to expressing interest in participating, potential participants completed a screening form on Qualtrics. Appendix C shows the Qualtrics forms that was utilized for this study. Interested participants who met the inclusion criteria were provided with an opportunity to opt in to participate in an interview. Interested participants who opted in to participate in an interview were taken to a second Qualtrics form where they were asked to provide their name, email address, and current institution. This information was used to contact responders and invite them to schedule an interview. Interviews were conducted as participants expressed interest. The Qualtrics survey was utilized to collect basic demographic information in order to screen potential participants. The screening form was completed by 47 individuals and 17 were screened in and opted to express interest in being interviewed. Of the 17 interested individuals, one requested to withdraw prior to being interviewed and eleven scheduled and completed an interview. Four individuals did not respond to the request to schedule an interview. One individual was excluded from being interviewed as he had not yet begun taking courses at the institution. A total of eleven participant interviews were conducted. Participant demographics are available in Table 5.

During the data collection process, the 2020 coronavirus pandemic forced the IRB at the researcher's institution to suspend all previously approved research participant recruitment. Additionally, all face-to-face participant interviews were prohibited, allowing only phone and video interviews to be conducted. Therefore, all but two interviews were conducted via Skype for Business Video Conferencing.

Saturation was reached after eleven interviews. While Creswell (2014) identified one to two participants as an appropriate sample size for a narrative approach, Creswell (2012) explained that more participants may be utilized. Creswell (2014) explained that the focus should be to reach saturation and that the number of participants may vary. Litchman (2013) explained that when it comes to sample size, there is no real perfect number of participants. The number of participants needed will vary based on the topic and sample. The focus should be to “describe and interpret rather than to generalize” (p. 193). It is common for qualitative studies to consist of a sample size around 10 participants with fewer at times. However, it must be noted that there is not a consensus on the most appropriate number of participants within the overall body of literature (Lichtman, 2013). In following Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Charmaz (2006) saturation, the collecting of data until no new themes or insights emerge was reached.

Multiple methods were used to collect data for this study. Research approval was received from the Institutional Review Board at Texas Tech University, as seen in Appendix H. The literature component of the study was conducted through the use of scholarly databases, such as Eric, JSTOR, and ProQuest. Demographic data was collected from each participant. Each participant was asked a series of questions regarding their experiences on a college campus. With regard to interviewing participants, a 60-minute semi-structured interview was conducted with questions focused on the experiences and perceptions of students and how they utilize various resources. Appendix E shows the demographic questions each participant was asked to

complete prior to each interview. Appendix F shows the interview protocol that was followed for each semi-structured interview.

Participants received a \$20 Amazon gift card for participating. The gift cards were sent electronically using the email provided by the participant. Each participant was asked to sign a recipient information form in compliance with TTU OP 62.25. Each participant was asked to provide a pseudonym prior to the start of the interview. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. The transcription process first involved an automated transcription service transcribing the audio. The transcription was then compared to the audio for accuracy. Once the transcription process was completed, a copy of the transcript was emailed to the participant for member checking. Each participant was asked to review the transcript for accuracy and to reply with any corrections within two weeks from the date sent. Three participants responded to the member checking email and approved the accuracy of the transcript. The remaining eight participants did not respond to the request. The purpose of member checking is to have another individual aside from the researcher, in this case the participant, review the transcript for accuracy in an effort to reduce bias and to increase credibility (Creswell, 2014; Lichtman, 2013). Following the confirmation of transcript accuracy, all audio recordings were destroyed in order to protect the identity of the participants. All transcripts were de-identified and both the participants and their institution were given a pseudonym to protect their identity.

A pilot study was conducted during the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 academic years. The pilot study (Herridge et al., 2019) examined the experiences and perceptions of lesbian, gay, and bisexual international students at postsecondary

institutions in the U.S. The study was guided by Dillon et al.'s (2011) the unifying model of sexual identity development. The creation of the interview protocol was guided by theory and went through multiple rounds of review prior to use (Herridge et al., 2019). The first round of review was conducted by faculty members within the respective fields of research to ensure the questions were appropriate to the field. The second round of review was conducted by international students to ensure the questions and meaning of terms would translate to other cultures. Throughout the period of data collection, notes were taken on participant feedback on the clarity of the questions (Herridge et al., 2019). Information collected regarding the overall clarity of questions and terms were used to revise the interview protocol. Additionally, based on findings and feedback from scholars within the field, additional theories, such as the model of multiple dimensions of identity (Jones & McEwen, 2000) were used to guide this study.

### **Data Analysis**

Strauss and Corbin's (1998) three-step process for coding was utilized. First, categories were created through the use of open coding. Second, axial coding was used to combine categories and to create subcategories. Third, themes were developed through selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Throughout the data collection process, interviews were recorded and transcribed. The process of data analysis started with memoing. The use of memoing was intended to aid in the identification of relevant information and researcher reflectivity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The next step of data analysis began when data collection had been completed. A codebook was first developed based on the theories, the Unifying Model of Sexual Identity

Development and the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity. The use of open coding during this process allowed for the identification of relevant information that address the research questions. Using a narrative analysis approach, interview transcripts were reviewed and coded, looking for common themes. Similar codes were collapsed. Riessman (2008) mentioned that thematic coding is a beneficial approach within narrative analysis. Saldana (2013) explained that the utilization of a narrative approach for coding is “appropriate for exploring intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions to understand the human condition through story, which is justified in and of itself as a legitimate way of knowing ...” (p. 132).

A codebook was created based on the established components of the theories. An initial review of the transcripts was conducted to develop overall codes based on the theories. NVivo 12 was the data analysis software utilized. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software. The codebook was uploaded to NVivo. Nodes were created in NVivo based on the codebook. The transcripts were individually coded using the established codebook in NVivo. Through the use of axial coding, the identified codes were placed into clusters within categories. Similar and overlapping codes were collapsed and subcategories were formed. The identification of patterns among the codes and categories led to the development of themes. Utilizing information provided by participants, it was possible to apply the unifying model of sexual identity development and the model of multiple dimensions of identity to the experiences of queer Latinx men in postsecondary education.

## **Data Management Plan**

Data collected were managed in accordance with institutional policies and research ethics. All obtained identifiers remained separate of any data collected. Email addresses and telephone numbers of participants were only used to schedule a time to conduct an interview. The email addresses and telephone numbers were not paired or associated with any data collected. Participants were asked to select a pseudonym for data collection purposes. Selected pseudonyms were not associated with any personally identifying information. All obtained identifiers were kept in a locked location, separate from any collected data. The Center for Research in Leadership and Education, on the campus of Texas Tech University, was utilized as a locked and secure location for storing data. The center is a locked research suite within the College of Education building that provided locked storage areas within the suite. Additionally, all electronic data was secured with the unique login requirement for accessing computers in the center and within a personal, secured, Dropbox folder.

No personally identifiable information from the participants will be published or included in this dissertation. Any responses quoted within the results were connected to a pseudonym. The analysis of data and reporting include the themes that appear in the data. Once the transcription process was completed, the audio files were destroyed. Anonymous Qualtrics forms were used during the screening process to ensure no collected interview information data were associated with a participant's identity.

The researcher was the only individual with access to research data with regard to data collection and data analyses. All physical copies of obtained data were kept

inside the locked and secured Center for Research in Leadership and Education. Digital files were stored using Dropbox. Due to the researcher's institution requiring remote working conditions, the data were accessed and analyzed via a secured remote connection to the Center for Research in Leadership and Education established by the institution's technology services. Data will be securely retained for a minimum of three years, in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations (Protection of Human Subjects, 2009). The process for destroying any paper copies of data involved shredding the documents. Electronic files will be erased using approved software.

### **Trustworthiness and Transferability**

The trustworthiness of a study is an important concept that needs to be addressed prior to beginning any research and throughout the research process (Perez & Sáenz, 2017). To measure the trustworthiness of a study, one must start by “addressing issues of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability” (Perez & Sáenz, 2017, p. 169). Credibility is considered to replace internal validity, transferability replaces external validity, dependability replaces reliability, and confirmability replaces objectivity (Lichtman, 2013). Credibility is the belief that the results should be from the point of view of the participants (Lichtman, 2013). This was completed through the process of member checking. Looking at the credibility of the study, any data that does not support the initial analysis was examined in order to ensure that all sides of the outcome were considered, essentially providing both sides of the story (Perez & Sáenz, 2017). Transferability refers to the ability of the findings to be transferred to other settings (Lichtman, 2013). According to Lichtman (2013), it is the reader who determines if the findings are transferable. In an effort to ensure

transferability of the study, detailed descriptions were provided of the participants and their experiences surrounding the situation being studied. Through the process of providing detailed descriptions, other researchers and professionals in the field will have the ability to determine at what level the outcomes of the study could be generalizable to their current situation. Dependability refers to the changing context surrounding the research (Lichtman, 2013). To address the dependability, I ensured the most recent literature was utilized and explained the institutional context related to the findings. Confirmability is “the degree to which the results can be confirmed or corroborated by others” (Lichtman, 2013, p. 299). To address the issue of dependability and confirmability, detailed notes on the processes taken during the entire study were kept. Additionally, it was important to ensure that one remains subjective when analyzing data in order to ensure personal biases do not interfere with the outcome of the study (Perez & Sáenz, 2017).

Cherryholmes (1992) explained that through pragmatism, qualitative research works to “clarify meaning of intellectual concepts” (p. 13). To ensure trustworthiness of the findings, it was important to discuss all areas of the data, including portions that may suggest a different approach than what is standardly found in the literature. When it comes to the transferability of the findings, it is important to note that qualitative research is typically not considered generalizable (Lichtman, 2013). However, through the process of discussing the data and placing meaning in them individuals will have the ability to apply the findings to their own environment (Lichtman, 2013).

Trustworthiness was ensured by triangulating the data, collecting data from more than one data source (Mathison, 1988; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Individual one-

on-one interviews were conducted with participants. Member-checking was also conducted by sending each participant a copy of the transcript to confirm for accuracy. Conducting semi-structured interviews with queer Latinx men increased the trustworthiness and generalizability of the findings among HSIs.

### **Positionality**

I identify as a White, queer, cisgender man from the Southwest region of the U.S. While this study was completed at an HSI, I have completed most of my postsecondary education at PWIs. However, it must be noted that while the selected institution is an HSI, it is also a PWI. With a topic focused on the experiences of queer Latinx men, it is important to address the potential implications of the research being conducted by a White cisgender man.

Conducting this study, I was aware of and understood the biases, as a researcher, I may hold in researching this population. As a Queer man, I recognized I may hold views or beliefs about the experiences of queer individuals in higher education. Through the development of the research questions and interview protocol, I was aware of biases I may hold. I continued to recognize any biases I may hold as I conducted interviews, memoed, analyzed, and interpreted the data. When it comes to a researcher's positionality, it "not only shapes their own research, but influences their interpretation, understanding and ultimately their belief in the 'truthfulness' of other's research that they read or are exposed to" (Holmes, 2010, p. 5).

When conducting research focused on the experiences of marginalized populations, it is important to ensure precautions are taken to prevent further marginalization (Bishop, 2005; Gunaratnam, 2003; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). When

instances of misrepresentation occur within research, objectification and exploitation of marginalized populations occur (Alcoff, 1991; Delgado-Bernal, 1998). Previous research conducted by White individuals, in some cases, have presented findings in a manner that misrepresents the words spoken by marginalized individuals (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). Alcoff (1991) argued that the practice of utilizing research in a manner that speaks for others “is arrogant, vain, unethical, and politically illegitimate” (p. 6). The act of speaking for others is a form of silencing (Alcoff, 1991). White researchers cannot conduct and publish research in the name of social justice in an effort to be a ‘savior’ (Garza, 2004).

To avoid the further marginalization of populations by White researchers, some have called for only members of a certain group conducting research on the members within that group (Pillow, 2003b). As such, this would counter any potential power dynamics (Pillow, 2003a). However, considering intersectionality, it would be almost impossible to ensure race, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, all align between the researcher and participants (Alcoff, 1991). The avoidance of power dynamics between researcher and participant may not be as simple as ensuring all parties are members of the same group as research tends to be conducted in a manner that serves the interests of the researcher and their stakeholders rather than those of the participants (Kvale, 2006; Pillow, 2003b).

Considering the arguments raised, Alcoff (1991) presented a question “if I don’t speak for those less privileged than myself, am I abandoning my political responsibility to speak out against oppression, a responsibility incurred by the very

fact of my privilege?” (p. 8). To counter the potential for speaking for, the concept of ‘speaking to’ was recommended. As a means of speaking to,

We should strive to create wherever possible the conditions for dialogue and the practice of speaking with and to rather than speaking for others. If the dangers of speaking for others result from the possibility of misrepresentation, expanding one's own authority and privilege, and a generally imperialist speaking ritual, then speaking with and to can lessen these dangers. (Alcoff, 1991, p. 23)

Utilizing research findings in a manner that speak to participants rather than speaking for marginalized populations can be used as a form of social justice activism. Activism centered around social justice is not just a collection of words in a publication, it is described as “an attitude shaped by values, beliefs, and lived experiences” (Garza, 2004).

It is not always possible to approach research without bringing personal experiences, identities, or biases along (Lichtman, 2013). As such, within qualitative research, it should not be the goal to remain objective (Lichtman, 2013). Malterud (2001) explained that when it comes to a researcher’s personal experiences, “a researcher’s background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions” (p. 483-484). As such, researchers must remain critical in their qualitative research while also acknowledging their own personal experiences, identities, or biases (Lichtman, 2013).

In an effort to remain critical and cognizant of potential biases, it is important to be reflexive (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). In essence, “reflexivity is an attitude of attending systematically to the context of knowledge construction, especially to the effect of the researcher, at every step of the research process” (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Lichtman (2013) explained that this process involves disclosing your personal story and by doing so, “you will get your participants to open up and reveal the fabric of their lives in ways you could not expect (Lichtman, 2013, p. 163). Essentially, it is necessary to understand who you are, what identities you hold, why you have chosen to conduct the research you are conducting, what you are hoping to accomplish, and how you plan to accomplish it. Within qualitative research, the researcher is involved within every aspect of the research (Lichtman, 2013). In order to remain reflexive, the researcher must be aware of their own position and bias and the role this can play on their objectivity.

In order to remain cognizant of the research process and the biases one may hold, it is important to continuously reflect on the process (Lacy, 2017). Additionally, as the researcher’s positionality changes or evolves over time, they must account for this and take steps to ensure new biases do not affect the study. It is also critical to make sure the relationship between the research and participants is not one-sided and only beneficial to the researcher (Lacy, 2017). To ensure the awareness of potential biases and changes in positionality, I engaged in memoing and reflection. The purpose of reflexivity is to reflect upon oneself and examine the connections between the researcher and the research (Hsiung, 2010). One must remain aware of any biases they may hold and how they could impact the research process through the wording of

questions and analysis of data (Hsiung, 2010). Additionally, it is necessary for me to remain aware of and acknowledge the identities I hold and the societal privileges that are associated with those identities in order to establish rapport with participants and to effectively approach the research process.

Throughout the research process, I engaged in reflexivity and memoing. Memoing is the process of the researcher recording, through physical notes, their reflections, observations, and important ideas or quotes (Groenewald, 2008). “Through the use of memos, the researcher is able to immerse themselves in the data, explore the meaning that this data holds, maintain continuity and sustain momentum in the conducting of research” (Birks et al., 2008, p. 69). Memoing allows for a researcher to enhance the overall credibility of their research process (Groenewald, 2008). In addition to saving any ideas or points that could be beneficial for use at a later point, incorporating memoing into the research process from the beginning enables the researcher to remain aware of potential biases and navigate them throughout the process (Birks et al., 2008).

In developing the interview protocol, I considered the identities I held and how I navigated the campus environment based on those identities. Additionally, I considered the process I went through from active exploration to synthesis (Dillon et al., 2011) and how I present the identities I hold or actively do not present an identity I hold (Jones & McEwen, 2000) when engaging with the campus environment. At times, I included questions to inquire about the perception of the participants regarding things that I knew were impactful to my experience at the institution. For example, the institution first started using an LGBTQIA Inclusion statement for the course syllabi

during my time there. In my nine years of college, the course I took on human sexuality with my committee member was the first time I had ever seen such a statement used. Knowing the impact seeing such a statement on a syllabus at an institution in a conservative area had on my perceptions of the instructor and the overall institution, I intentionally asked the participants whether they have seen the syllabus statement be used and if so, did it have any impact on how they perceived the faculty members and institution.

In taking detailed notes during the interviews, I noted important key words or topics that aligned with topics from other participants or with the overall literature and theories. During the initial analyzing of the transcripts to create the codebook, I utilized these notes to guide me and to ensure I did not miss any important topics discussed by the participants. I also used the notes as a means for writing the context surrounding a particular comment made by a participant to ensure that when reading the transcripts at a later date, I would be able to interpret the comments within the correct context and not apply the wrong meaning. Additionally, I memoed my initial thoughts and reactions to the interview and the comments made by the participant immediately following the conclusion of the interview. In doing so, I was able to note any thoughts or reactions that I had or comment on areas where I may disagree or agree with the participant. At times, participants made comments about particular experiences and interpretations of programs and departments that I disagreed with or held similar opinions. For example, some participants commented on maintaining a belief that certain programs or resources did not exist when I was aware of the programs and resources existing at the institution. During these instances, I noted the

participants' comments and also annotated my notes to reflect that this was an important concept to address but that I also needed to address what programs and resources were available at the institution as the lack of awareness could be a result of other issues.

During the research process of conducting interviews and analyzing the data, I found myself reflecting on the identities I held and further exploring my sexual identity based on the comments and experiences of the participants. At times, some participants used terms I was not originally familiar with. In doing research on the terms used, I found my sexual identity being refined. Through this process, I found myself using a different term than I previously used to define my sexual identity. In writing the findings and discussion, I incorporated my personal experiences to help further expand a concept or to explain why a particular theme may be present. For example, when discussing the lack of representation of faculty and staff members who identify as queer, I discussed how when teaching as an instructor, I contribute to this in that I do not disclose my sexual identity in the classroom due to concerns for safety. In discussing my personal experiences and reflecting on my thoughts and reactions throughout the research process, I am able to explain how I engaged with the research process, the data, and engage in an authentic dialogue that addresses any biases and enhances the overall understanding of the findings and my interpretation of the findings.

### **Summary**

This qualitative study utilized a narrative inquiry as the methodological approach as a means for examining the experiences of students who identify as queer

Latinx men at a designated HSI in the Southwest region of the U.S. The development of the interview protocol was guided by the theories unifying model of sexual identity development and the model of multiple dimensions of identity. It was refined after use in a pilot study during the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 academic years. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with queer Latinx men. Saturation was reached after eleven participant interviews. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for accuracy. Following the transcription process, participants were asked to review the transcriptions through member checking in order to confirm correctness.

Data analysis began with the process of memoing during the data collection portion of the study. Following the completion of data collection, thematic coding was utilized. Thematic coding is the most beneficial approach when it comes to narrative inquiry. As such, data analysis was conducted through a three-step process for coding. First, open coding was used to create categories. Second, subcategories were created through axial coding. Third, selective coding was used to develop themes.

As it is important to take precautions to ensure marginalized populations are not further marginalized, the researcher engaged in memoing and reflection throughout the research process. As such, it allowed the researcher to remain aware of any biases they may hold and to acknowledge the identities they hold and the societal privileges associated with those identities and any impact they could pose within the research process. The goal of reflectivity and memoing is to prevent further marginalization, reduce potential for bias, and to enhance the credibility of the research process.

## CHAPTER IV

The aim of this study was to examine the experiences of queer Latinx men at a four-year postsecondary institution designated as an HSI as established by the U.S. Department of Education's MSI classification in the Southwest region of the U.S. Specifically, this study examined the experiences of marginalized students, their perceptions of their campus climate, and the impact of the intersectionality of the identities they hold on their experiences and identity development. The primary research question was:

- How do the intersecting identities of sexuality, race, and gender impact the campus experiences of queer Latinx men within Hispanic Serving Institutions?

The secondary questions were:

- In what ways have attending an HSI promoted or hindered identity development for queer Latinx men?
- What are the institutional resources queer Latinx men utilize at HSIs?

First, I will present a descriptive profile of the respondents and discuss their demographics. I will then provide a detailed description of each participant and explain their background with regard to the identities they hold and their connection with the institution. Lastly, I will present the emerging themes for the primary research question, research question one, and the secondary research questions, research questions two and three.

### **Descriptive Profile of Participants**

A descriptive profile of the individual participants within the study will be provided. Table 5 presents the participant demographic information. Participants were

asked to select their own pseudonym to be used within this study. In the event that a participant declined to select their own pseudonym, one was chosen by using the most popular Latinx baby name for the year the participant was born. The presentation of the participants is listed in alphabetical order. As all participants identify as Latinx, cisgender men, and attend the same institution, this information was omitted from the demographics in Table 5. Following Table 5 is a detailed profile of each participant in order to paint a picture of each participant and to enhance the voice of each participant. Lucian and Joseph were interviewed in person and all other participants were interviewed via Skype for Business video conferencing. The individual participant profiles are also presented in alphabetical order.

**Table 5**

*Participant Demographics*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Sexual Identity</b>	<b>Out</b>	<b>Age Identified as Member of Queer Community</b>	<b>Years at University</b>
<b>Al Gallego</b>	21	Pansexual	Yes	8	3
<b>Jack</b>	23	Gay	Yes	6 or 7	6
<b>Jacob</b>	25	Bisexual	Yes	25	2
<b>Joseph</b>	21	Gay	Yes	17	2
<b>Joseph</b>	18	Bisexual	Some [Close Friends/Not Family]	14	1
<b>Josh</b>	20	Gay	Yes	11	1
<b>Lucian</b>	18	Gay	Yes	7	0.5
<b>Michael</b>	27	Gay	Yes	12	7
<b>Nathan</b>	21	Queer	Some [Friends/Not Family]	14	4
<b>Storytelling Artist</b>	23	Gay	Yes	15	6
<b>Trevor Martinez</b>	21	Bisexual	Some [Friends/Not Family]	13	1

*Note.* Participants presented in alphabetical order.

### **Individual Participant Profiles**

**Al.** Al is a 21-year-old cisgender man. He identifies as Latinx. He openly identifies as pansexual. Al reports being fully out to his friends and family. He began identifying as a member of the queer community around the age of eight. Al is an undergraduate student who is in his third year at the university, studying in the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

**Gallego.** Gallego is a 23-year-old cisgender man. He identifies as Hispanic. He openly identifies as gay and reports being fully out to his friends and family. He began identifying as a member of the queer community between the ages of six and seven. Gallego is an undergraduate student. He struggled with addiction during his second year as he attempted to come to terms with the identities he holds. In his sixth year at the university, Gallego is studying in the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

**Jack.** Jack is a 25-year-old cisgender man. He identifies as Latinx. Jack identifies as bisexual and reports being out to his friends and family. While Jack began questioning his sexuality while an undergraduate student, he began identifying as a member of the queer community around the age of 25. Jack is a graduate student who has studied at the university for two years. He is studying in the College of Visual and Performing Arts. Jack reports being in a committed relationship with a bisexual cisgender womxn.

**Jacob.** Jacob is a 21-year-old cisgender man. He identifies as Hispanic. He identifies as gay and is out to both his friends and family. He began identifying as a member of the queer community at the age of 17. Jacob is an undergraduate student in

his second year at the university, studying in the College of Media and Communication.

**Joseph.** Joseph is an 18-year-old cisgender man. He identifies as Hispanic and White. Joseph identifies as bisexual and reports being out to his close friends but not all of his friends or his family. While Joseph is not out to his parents, his sister who identifies as a lesbian is. He began identifying as a member of the queer community around the age of 14. Joseph is an undergraduate student who has studied at the university for one year. He is studying in the College of Arts and Sciences. Joseph is actively involved within the institution's Latinx resources and volunteers.

**Josh.** Josh is a 20-year-old cisgender man. He identifies as Hispanic. He openly identifies as gay and reports being fully out to his friends and family. He began identifying as a member of the queer community around the age of 11. Josh is an undergraduate student who has studied at the university for one year. He is studying in the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

**Lucian.** Lucian is an 18-year-old cisgender man. He identifies as Hispanic. He openly identifies as gay and demisexual. Lucian reports being fully out to his friends and family. He began identifying as a member of the queer community around the age of seven. Lucian is an undergraduate student who is on his second semester at the university, studying in the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

**Michael.** Michael is a 27-year-old cisgender man. He identifies as Latino. He openly identifies as gay and reports being fully out to his friends and family. He began identifying as a member of the queer community around the age of 12. Michael is currently a graduate student. He also studied at the university for his undergraduate

degree. In his seventh year at the university, third as a graduate student, he is pursuing a degree in the College of Media and Communication and the College of Business Administration.

**Nathan.** Nathan is a 21-year-old cisgender man. He identifies as Hispanic. Nathan identifies as queer and reports being out to his friends but not his family. He began identifying as a member of the queer community around the age of 14. Nathan is an undergraduate student who has studied at the university for four years. He is studying in the College of Human Sciences.

**Storytelling Artist.** Storytelling Artist is a 23-year-old cisgender man. He identifies as Hispanic and Mexican. Storytelling Artist openly identifies as gay and reports being fully out to his friends and family. He began identifying as a member of the queer community around the age of 15. Storytelling Artist is an undergraduate student who has studied at the university for six years. He is studying in the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

**Trevor Martinez.** Trevor Martinez is a 21-year-old cisgender man. He identifies as Mexican. Trevor Martinez identifies as bisexual and reports being out to his friends but not his family. He began identifying as a member of the queer community around the age of 13. Trevor Martinez is an undergraduate student. He studied at a community college for three years prior to transferring to the current university. He has been at the current university for one year. He is studying in the College of Arts and Sciences.

### ***Summary of Individual Participant Profiles***

The participants shared many commonalities in addition to their race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual identity. With the exception of Jack, all participants began identifying as a member of the queer community during their adolescents. Five participants (Al, Gallego, Josh, Lucian, and Michael) began identifying as a member of the queer community during their pre-teen years. Five participants (Jacob, Joseph, Nathan, Storytelling Artist, and Trevor Martinez) began identifying as a member of the queer community during their teenage years. All participants reported being out to their friends and at the university. Three participants (Joseph, Nathan, and Trevor Martinez) reported not being out to their families. All other participants reported being out to their families. With the exception of Jack and Michael, all participants are undergraduate students. While a graduate student, Michael also completed his undergraduate degree at the university. All participants, with the exception of Lucian, had completed at least one year at the university at the time of their interview. Seven participants (Al, Gallego, Jack, Jacob, Michael, Nathan, and Storytelling Artist) completed at least one year at the university prior to the institution receiving the designation as an HSI.

### **Research Question One**

Research question one looked at how the intersecting identities of sexuality, race, and gender impact the campus experiences of queer Latinx men studying at HSIs. The respondents indicated a mixture of experiences based on their sexuality, race, and gender. Four emerging themes that appeared were: Masculinity, Online Research, Heteronormativity and Homophobia, and Racism. The themes are defined

as follows: 1) masculinity addresses the societal construct that individuals assigned male at birth are expected to adhere to, 2) online research includes the use of online resources to learn about sexual orientation to explore and develop one's identity, 3) heteronormativity and homophobia refers to the societal assumption that individuals are innately heterosexual and the heteronormative expectations placed upon individuals by society and the dislike or engaging in discriminatory actions towards the queer community, and 4) racism refers to the discrimination experienced by Latinx individual within society and specifically within the queer community.

### ***Masculinity***

Within a White heteropatriarchal society, masculinity plays an important role in identity development and presentation (Pérez II & Okello, 2017). Men have been conditioned by society to not display their feelings or emotions (hooks, 2004). All but one respondent, Lucian, referred to masculinity as a negative societal construct. Additionally, of the eleven respondents, Lucian was the only one to not reference the concept of machismo as a negative aspect of masculinity within the Latinx culture. Furthermore, machismo was referenced as a significant factor in the identity development and expression of the respondents. While Lucian did not reference masculinity in a negative manner, he equated masculinity to being a man, saying "masculinity feels like it's tied to men." Additionally, he explained that confidence plays into masculinity. He discussed that while a man may act in an effeminate manner, "talking with my hands a lot and using, like, a limp wrist or you know talking a higher register," being confident or secure in your masculinity is what is important.

Jack explained that the idea of masculinity within the Latinx culture played a direct role in his not identifying as bisexual until later in life. Jack stated

I do feel that my Latinx identity, what's the word, it played a [role] in me identifying as bisexual later in life [...] but I wanted to be very clear that I do feel personally that because the masculinity that's ingrained in Latinx culture and how that masculinity is very centered around heterosexuality and the idea of heterosexuality and masculinity and those are desirable traits for young men in this culture kind of prolonged me from finding my true identity. That that did have an effect.

Similarly, Nathan discussed how growing up in a Mexican household impacted his identity development with regard to the intersectionality of his Latinx identity and queer identity. He explained

It would be, in the same sense, because my upbringing, kind of, affected, again, identity self-expression as a whole, like, trying to relate to other people and their upbringings or, let's say, yeah or people who have had, sort of, like, a more accepting background or parents that are a bit less ... I'm trying to figure out the English word for it ... I guess the idea of machismo, like men that are really ... nose pointed in the air and again want things done for them. I guess that sort of thing and the way that has kind of played out. I guess it's hard to find people who ... with, you know, the whole idea of intersectionality. I guess for me it means isolation just because I have hard times fully relating to people.

Gallego mentioned that growing up in a Latinx household reinforced the idea of machismo. Likewise, Joseph explained that when it comes to Hispanic households,

they are “very traditional, very customed” and that he must be the stereotypical man. Joseph explained that when it comes to masculinity within the Latinx culture, he must act in a certain manner, stating

They [men] don't really get to express themselves because of masculinity and I also feel that masculinity, I judge myself because I don't look like that. I don't look as masculine as other masculine people look. So, I just would go on ... I just like, oh I need to go to the gym because I don't look muscular enough or I don't, I'm too, I'm not thin enough.

Michael, Jacob, and Al also discussed how they believe that society's views of masculinity forces them to alter the way they act in public. Michael explained that he has to “really check myself about how feminine I act.” He went on to further describe how he must remain vigilant of his behavior, saying

So, there's times where I'm with either my family or in a meeting with fellow coworkers that I can't have the same conversation I have with friends. I can't, you know, talk about certain topics, I can't joke about certain things, I can't really let my personality shine through. I have to be very well aware of what I'm saying and how I'm presenting it, how my voice has been fluctuating like am I speaking too high, am I extending out words, am I ... is my body language too feminine, am I waving my hands too much, my .... is my posture like sitting weird. So, there's things like that I have to be really focused on sometimes in society.

Jacob discussed how growing up, he always maintained the view that acting feminine was bad and that he had to be masculine. He stated

I guess at the beginning, I was, like, no this isn't how it works, like, I can't be because, like, just, like, that's the bad thing like men don't do that, you know, and then one aspect of myself, I came from a very conservative town, so, like, there weren't many gay people so I didn't have a whole lot of exposure to very feminine men or anything like that so at first I was like oh my gosh why are you acting like this why can't you just act like a guy, which I know that that's kind of that's really bad now.

Al explained how he acts more masculine when he first meets someone because that is the way he was raised and that he feels he must express himself in a masculine manner until he gets more comfortable being around someone. Similarly, Trevor Martinez explained that he acts more straight and confident. Likewise, Storytelling Artist discussed how he developed self-esteem issues as a result of the expectations placed upon him about how he needed to act. Storytelling Artist explained how his father maintained the requirement that he be into sports, play outdoors, work on cars, and be a “stereotypical Hispanic man.” When it comes to Storytelling Artist’s sexuality, he discussed how he felt the need to hide his sexuality due to cultural expectations, stating

As far as being gay, I tried to hide that for the longest time. Even though I knew I knew I had certain people in my family that would, that would accept it. Like I knew my grandmother on my dad's side, who is that who is your stereotypical, basically a bruja, but stereotypical Hispanic woman, like, grandmother matriarch figure. Like any time any sort of sexuality would, would come up in the household, she would automatically be like oh don't worry about it, like, you

have a cousin who, who's like this and uses the like this with the limp wrist movement and while that is a little bit offensive I know she was trying to be accepting. Meanwhile, my dad, anytime anything remotely nonheterosexual what come on like the TV or any kind of movie, he would immediately become very uncomfortable. So, like, trying to navigate sexuality when you know your family isn't necessarily the most accepting was definitely also very, kind of, very not fun to do as a as a young child.

Josh also experienced masculine expectations being placed upon him within a Latinx household. He explained

Being raised in a Latinx household, I'm expected to work and marry a woman and have kids. That's what I'm supposed to do. But that's how I was raised. But coming up towards the age of my realization, I realized that I'm terrified to admit that I was. So, I would, I would try to be more masculine and try to wear masculine clothes that every everybody else in my family was wearing and not be who I am. So, it's very hard, especially in a Latinx community to be able to express yourself because, honestly, to me, I feel like the Latinx community is a lot more judgmental, not, not in a bad way, you know, sometimes it's funny, sometimes it's not. But you still have that, like, passive aggressive typeness to the words that are used.

As expressed by the respondents, masculinity played a strong role in their identity development and in how they express themselves within society. Growing up within the Latinx culture, the concept of machismo had a strong influence. Respondents explained the expectation that they act in a masculine manner and to engage in

activities and behaviors deemed to be more masculine. Additionally, there was the idea of compulsory heterosexuality where the respondents were assumed to be heterosexual and expected to meet society's norms for men. Navigating masculinity within the Latinx culture caused the respondents to not fully feel comfortable expressing their true identities and felt the need to maintain a persona that presented them as masculine and heterosexual in order to meet the expectations placed upon them. This resulted in their not coming out to their families until later in life.

### ***Researching Their Identity***

Growing up in a heteronormative environment, respondents expressed the need to conduct research to learn about the identities they hold. This research may have been done online through the reading of articles or taking quizzes, by watching television or movies, or through talking with others. Gallego and Joseph discussed how they furthered their knowledge about sexuality by watching television shows such as *Glee*. Storytelling Artist utilized applications such as Grindr, a gay dating app, to meet others who hold similar identities and to explore his sexuality. Trevor Martinez explained that he would Google “how to know if I’m gay,” “how to know if I’m bisexual,” or “how to know if I’m straight” and would take BuzzFeed quizzes in addition to reading articles online about sexuality. Nathan discussed that growing up he utilized Google to learn more about different identities. He explained

I was the kind of kid who had to Google everything. Like, okay, what am I feeling, what am I thinking, I don't understand this, I don't understand that. All of my browsers on, like, incognito mode and that sort of thing. So, I had this sort of thing of like okay, I'm needing to discover myself online and like

needing to discover myself in private because 1) I didn't want the word to get back to my parents so just a lot of, like, okay if I had queer friends back in middle school, it was like a tiny handful and I would just you know do everything in such a subdued way to not be found out, just for my own personal safety because I knew they were gonna take it rough and of course when they found out they did. And that kind of left a very weird kind of ... I guess, I've just never felt comfortable being myself in my own home.

Jack also discussed the use of Google and online articles to learn more about sexuality. Jack would also engage in discussions with friends about sexuality and then conduct further research after their conversations to learn more and to see if he may hold that identity, such a biromantic versus bisexual. Nathan reflected on his use of Instagram to connect with other queer individuals and to talk about identity with others who had shared experiences.

I think at that time it was just Instagram. I would go, I would meet and, like, oh okay you're gay too, let's ... What's your experience been, like, what have you experienced, ... I, kind of, thrive on learning from other people's experiences. That's sort of just like a personal thing, that's how I, kinda, learn and how I grow.

Lucian explained that he learned about demisexuality and polyamory relationships through his professors. By his professors discussing their personal lives and experiences, Lucian was able to learn about other sexualities and began to realize that he may be demisexual. In a similar manner of talking with others, Gallego utilized

mental health counselors and substance abuse groups as a manner to discuss his identities and learn more about what his identity may be.

### ***Heteronormativity and Homophobia***

Respondents experienced heteronormativity and homophobia both within the campus environment and with their families. These systems impacted the respondents on multiple levels and varied based on their identities and depending on how they presented their identities. Compulsory heterosexuality plays a role within a heteronormative society. This is the assumption that everyone is innately heterosexual. Joseph explained how there are societal norms that one must align with. He discussed not being able to listen to “girly songs,” dance, watch movies such as “Clueless” or “Mean Girls” in order to avoid others thinking he might be gay. Storytelling Artist explained that he fell into the heteronormative mindset at times. He felt that he needed to date someone who was masculine in order to fill the stereotypical idea of a masculine and feminine relationship dynamic. Jacob discussed encountering heteronormativity at work and on campus and how he found it annoying that he needed to continuously come out, saying

It's just annoying having to tell everyone, like, it's just, like, it's, kinda, hard to explain. But it's, like, let's say, like, you really like this candy and like it's a very controversial candy, like, you can get, something can happen, right. If you like the candy and you just have to tell people over and over and over again most people might not care, which that's, like, how I've found it here at [Institution in Southwest Region of the U.S.]. But this is something very annoying they have to do every single time you meet a new person. It's not

something that's assumed about you or anything like that. It's, like, oh do you have a girlfriend, like, no I don't have a girlfriend or anything like that. It's just an inconvenience more than anything.

Jacob went on to explain instances of homophobia that he has encountered on campus, in a student organization in which he is a member. When participating in a student organization for his major, an officer of the organization would often make homophobic remarks directed at Jacob and other members. Michael, who worked on campus, recounted experiences he had in the office, saying

But as far as like negative experiences, I guess actually I guess I have had some in the like in the workplace. And that's just because of the work that I was in, it's just marketing and advertising, so they look at demographics and you know target audiences but they were talking about gay Latino men and like what they experience and that was when I felt the most stereotypes because they're talking about how they how we're just like those very flamboyant pool boy type of gays which I thought was weird because that's not how I identified at all. But they're yeah that's really like the only I stereotypical or negative impact or negative encounter I had with seeing some of the stories that people brought up or movie references because in some of the movies that they were talking about the gay character was always like this flamboyant either dressed or great hair character or whatever. And for me, you see that like in the regular gay culture in general, it's not Latino gays. So, it was weird, but I mean other than that no one really ever really truly judged me for being Latino and gay. I mean, you had like your different encounters in

each group like when I would hang out with some gay friends, not all of them, they would always try to like incorporate like parts of my culture into conversation and by that I mean like they'll just say like "hola" or just used different little things like that. Call me things like "Latina Turner" or things like that but it was all like in good fun, just jokes and stuff. But, yeah, I mean I don't really, I don't know about tying them together.

Religion, as Lucian explains, can play a role in this belief. Lucian described how his family would always ask him when he is going to get a girlfriend. He further explained that

My mom's side of the family, my mom is Catholic. So, it's her side. My dad is Baptist. Two of probably the most strictest sects of Christianity but my mom's side of the family is very Catholic and I'm not, again I'm not necessarily trying to hide it from them, but I will say that if there was ever people or anybody in particular that I would try to hide my sexuality from, it would be them. Because in the, well you know, in the Hispanic culture, and I guess more specifically Mexican, both my grandparents are from Mexico. It's, they're very very religious, and where they've, how they've both been brought up, being gay is a sin. So, and if you're, if you sin, you go to Hell.

Similarly, Al discussed the social pressure he experiences from his family to "get married with a woman and have kids." Trevor Martinez expressed concerns with religion and culture with regard to his sexuality. He explained that while he believed that "if God didn't want me to be this way, he wouldn't have made me this way," his family maintained internalized homophobia due to their culture and religious beliefs.

In a similar manner to Trevor Martinez, Nathan reported experiencing homophobia from his family as a result of his family's religious beliefs, resulting in his limiting how he acts and is seen, saying

I'm not gonna do anything that draws too much attention to myself. I guess I've kind of limited, I don't know, things like mannerisms, or clothing, or that sort of thing, just to avoid any sort of, like, extra sets of eyes on me.

Jacob echoed the sentiment of there being a division between religion and homosexuality. He explained

I guess being Latinx within, well I guess both ... one of the big things is like religion. Most Hispanics tend to be Catholics. It's just, like, I don't know, it's just a weird thing to me. Like, I was raised Catholic but then like when we got to the U.S., like, I went to a Baptist church. That was like a whole different kind of thing and Catholic Church really goes down hard on homosexuality and ... but recently I've seen that it's been becoming more accepting and I just ... It's just, like, a weird thing to me because it was always something really bad before. Which that's and I've always had a problem with religion since one of my pastors was not good ... very Christian like when it came to homosexuality so it was just something that every time we talk about religion in a setting where there's a lot of Latinx gay people it's always like oh either there's people that are very religious and still keep their religion or they said that they used to be and now they're not because of the way they were treated by the church.

Nathan explained that while he is out to everyone except his family, he maintains a fear that he will encounter homophobia within the community due to living in a city that is predominately religious, stating

My parents are very Christian, but I guess, kind of, bringing that over I, kind of, the ... It's not that I believe everybody here is like that. I guess it's just more out of, like, safety that I choose to, I don't know, wear certain things aren't too, you know, out there. Or say choose to say a little bit less or do a little bit less in the community just as a means of ... I mean I don't think I'm in any harm. But I guess it's just the idea that my parents' ideologies are kind of similar to the people ... well to a larger majority of people that are here. It, kind of, makes me ... I guess it's like a subconscious thing. I feel little bit nervous at times

Storytelling Artist explained that within his family, homosexuality was not acceptable. He explained,

When I started as a freshman I came from a household where I was very ashamed of myself. I was told that I couldn't be the way that I am and still have my family and so I tried to keep a lot of my personal life really, really hidden.

While Josh is out to his friends and family, he recalled a situation of homophobia he observed within the community. He discussed how the situation has caused him to reconsider how he presents himself within the community, stating

But as the community as a whole, it's a lot more, I would say, not chaotic, but in a sense, [...] it's very hard to express yourself through the community here in [town in Southwest Region of the U.S.]. You have to hide yourself more

than on campus. Like, there's, I saw at Home Depot where some guy was speaking in a very high voice, you know, I had no problem with it, some older man came up and was using the F word and calling him Transgender, saying why is your voice so high, so, that's where it's kind of, you know, we fall back into hiding, I guess, in a sense.

Josh went on to explain that being gay within the Latinx community is difficult due to the belief that if you are gay, “you weren't born the right way.” Gallego echoed Josh's statement, saying that “As I made it to high school, I became more aware that being gay is who I am, but I didn't really accept it. I guess it was, kind of, like, an aspect of me that I shoved under the rug.”

### ***Racism in the Queer Community and On-Campus***

**Racism in the Queer Community.** Respondents expressed experiencing racism based on their Latinx identity in the community and within the queer community. Lucian explained that within society, White is considered to be default. In a similar manner, Joseph discussed the common desire to date someone who looks similar. He expressed “I don't really see myself being with someone from a third world country.” Storytelling Artist expressed similar encounters as Lucian and Joseph, stating that he experienced discrimination within the queer community. He has found that on dating apps, such as Grindr, he will be ignored if he lists his ethnicity.

Storytelling Artist recalled his experiences with Grindr, saying

Definitely have been discriminated against. Not necessarily like hate crime or like that level of discrimination but ... the, like on dating apps. If I didn't put my ethnicity, I would typically get more messages than say someone who put

that they were Latino. Because I've actually ran a little experiment kind on that where I would compare Grindr with my boyfriend at the time I would make I made a profile not listing my ethnicity and then my boyfriend made a profile for me, like, it was, like, we were like we were in a different city, so it was, like, a different, like, space of people. It was and he made one of me with a picture of me and I didn't have a picture of me but I just had like my like physical statistics listed with no ethnicity and it was, it's kind of hurtful to see that more people would message me with no picture and not identifying as Latino than would message me when I had a picture of me. Like, I consider myself decently attractive. I'm not the most attractive person in the world, but like to see people who would just simply not talk to you because you're Latino and seeing the people that what message of blank profile as opposed to talking to you because they know what you look like, kind of not a fun feeling

Al echoed Storytelling Artist's experiences with racism in the queer community. He explained that individuals would often stop talking to him because of his Latinx identity, saying

Being Latinx within the queer community, it's strange actually because I get applauded sometimes for being Latinx, for being queer even though I am Latinx. And then sometimes it's, you know, in dating at least sometimes I'm talking to somebody and, you know, suddenly they stop talking to me and it's because they found someone who is like White Caucasian and sometimes it feels weird, especially here in [City in Southwest Region of U.S.], you know, given how fast times have changed here. Sometimes people date me just

because I'm Latinx and I'm queer and talk to me because of that and it's, kind of, a weird mashed experience being Latinx in the queer community.

Josh discussed trying to conceal his Latinx identity as he grew up due to being ashamed of being Latinx. However, overtime, as his identity development progressed, he reported becoming more comfortable with the identities he held and the intersectionality of being a queer Latinx man, saying

My identity as Latinx, at the beginning of my life I was very, I would say I was very hidden about it. I didn't, obviously people know that I am Latinx and from my skin, from my hair, from the color of my eyes, everything. But I didn't like it. I was just like, you know, like people are looking at me different because I don't look a certain way. But, as I grew older, I began to realize that you know this, this is me. This is who I am. If I can accept me being gay, I can accept me being Latinx. And that's, those two really formed into what I am today.

Josh went on to explain that dating within the gay community can be difficult at times due to there being a desire for “the White blonde-haired blue-eyed guy.” Jack discussed discrimination directed at Latinx men within the queer community veiled as personal preference. Michael echoed this statement, saying “They [queer community] would, you know, some have preferences, they're, like, I only like Latino men, or I only like White men, or Black men, or whatever.”

**Racism On-Campus.** Trevor Martinez explained that he experienced instances of racism on campus when participating in student organizations. He explained that he felt singled out when a faculty member stopped him from entering a meeting, saying

So, in theory, I do not look like somebody who would be really good at math. So, we were walking, and I stopped to get water, so I fell behind everybody. They all get in fine. But this guy, like, came out of a room and was, like, oh this is for the math club. Like, he got in front of me and what and I feel like he didn't do that to them. And so, it felt like I was being targeted because I looked different and I don't look like the typical Hispanic. Or the typical, well, math person.

Similar to Trevor Martinez, Jacob encountered instances of racism on campus at his place of employment, saying

I will say, in my office, I have different conversations depending on who I'm talking to. If it's ... most of the White people that work in my office that are conservative, especially my boss. She's one of the conservative ones. So, I really can't have conversations like I was with the other Hispanic co-workers in the office because they tend to be more liberal and I can have like more discussions about how like the president, the sitting president or the situation at hand and stuff like that. Especially when it came down to the ... what was that race controversy that we had on campus ... oh yeah, we had a ... It was on Twitter ... oh yeah it was on Twitter and that video, you know, about e-sports that basically blamed African Americans for all the problems of the U.S. My boss and me, kinda, talked about it a little bit and it was kind of just, like, oh I can't ... like yes it's a horrible video but like people like need to chill down or anything like that and just stuff like to kind of minimize the harm that it was actually doing. And me and my Hispanic co-worker were like yeah, this video

is really bad like I can't believe someone would do that. Like, it actually kind of like it shows how messed up some people are. Like, and action should be taken about this and it was something that I didn't see with my other coworkers.

Similarly, Michael expressed situations at his place of employment where co-workers would refer to Latinx students in stereotypical or negative terms. Nathan expressed concerns regarding institutional policy when it comes to race. He explained that he felt the institution was “tone deaf to the needs of minorities” and that the institution needs to make an effort to build a sense of community that incorporated all students. Similar to Nathan, Gallego expressed a feeling that the institution avoided engaging in conversations regarding marginalized populations, “whether it’s by oversight or intentional dismissal of the subject at hand.”

### **Summary of Research Question One**

When considering how the intersecting identities of sexuality, race, and gender impact the campus experiences of queer Latinx men, respondents expressed that masculinity, online research, heteronormativity and homophobia, and racism all played into their identity development and experiences. Traits of toxic masculinity were apparent throughout respondent’s life and intertwined with their Latinx culture. This directly impacted respondents’ identity development with regard to the deepening and commitment and synthesis of their sexual identity. Additionally, respondents discussed encountering heteronormativity and homophobia due to expectations placed upon them by their families to marry a womxn and regarding the conflict between religion and homosexuality. Instances of heteronormativity and homophobia appeared

both on campus and when interacting with their families. Respondents experienced different levels of heteronormativity and homophobia depending on the environment and the identities they were actively presenting. The intersectionality of their identities contributed to their experiences and how they engaged with the environment and when they decided to present or without a particular identity, such as their queer identity. In addition to experiencing racism within the campus community, respondents described instances within the queer community where there is often a desire to date White men instead of Latinx men being veiled as a personal preference. In order to further develop their identities, respondents expressed a need to engage in research and communication with others in order to learn about sexuality and to help determine their own sexual orientation. Instances of heteronormative expectations, homophobia, and racism created conflict between the respondents' queer identity and Latinx identity. Respondents experienced difficulties engaging in the exploration of their sexual identity and synthesis of their sexual identity into their daily life due to attempts to conceal their sexual identity.

### **Research Question Two**

Research question two examined the ways attending an HSI promoted or hindered identity development for queer Latinx men. Respondents predominately reported that attending an HSI did not promote identity development to the extent expected. The four emerging themes were: Lack of Awareness, Lack of Representation, Perceived Community, and Passing. The themes are defined as follows: 1) lack of awareness refers to not being aware of the institution being an HSI and not being aware of available resources, 2) lack of representation is the feeling of

not seeing other individuals at the institution who hold similar identities, either Latinx or queer, 3) perceived community refers to the sense of community with being around others who hold similar identities, and 4) passing is the concept of presenting your identity in a manner in order to be perceived as a member of the dominant societal group.

### ***Lack of Awareness***

Discussing awareness of institutional policies and resources, Lucian explained that he was not too familiar with what was available. He explained “I don’t care unless they affect me.” Josh mentioned that he does not utilize resources or engage fully on campus due to a lack of knowledge of what is available, saying “I don’t really use utilize any resources on campus. I’m guessing just from the lack of information and the lack of knowledge that I have about it. So, I don’t really know what resources I have on campus.” Nathan discussed how he has not been made aware of any resources or institutional initiatives directed at Latinx students. He stated

In terms of actually seeing more people on campus or seeing resources and funds and policies, like, that sort of thing directed towards me and my status in that way, I mean not a lot has changed since I got to the university. Nobody’s ever reached out and said hey, new resources are available for you or Hey, you’re this, you’re that, come out and do this or that or we’re here to help you with this or that. Like, if anything, maybe more faces but again I’m not involved in too much out of my own social sphere on campus. So, it’s kind of hard for me to say like oh yeah there’s a 20 percent increase in Mexican people running around or, you know, that sort of thing.

Similarly, Al explained he did not know the institution was an HSI, saying “I didn't even know about this.” Storytelling Artist explained that he knows there is a large number of Latinx students at the institution, but he is not aware of resources or institutional initiative geared towards Latinx students saying “I actually haven't noticed too much. I do remember reading something about that. And I do know that there are quite a large number of Hispanic students.” Echoing the statements of Al and Storytelling Artist, Gallego stated he was not aware that the institution was an HSI or of any resources or initiatives geared towards Latinx students. Jack explained that between the time before the institution was designated as an HSI and after, he did not notice much of a change. He stated

I was here a year before the distinction and then the year of the distinction if you will. I haven't noticed much difference, but I assume part that is because [Institution in Southwest Region of U.S.] had been building up to that, you know.

Michael explained that he feels the institution's motivation for becoming an HSI was to receive the recognition rather than supporting Latinx students. He mentioned that he is not aware of any resources or initiative for Latinx students. He stated

I think it's just an award or recognition that we wanted to gain just to say we have it. But I hope something comes along soon that proves me wrong. I hope that there's actually a plan in place to really live up to what it means to be a Hispanic Serving Institution. But just right now I don't feel like I feel like anything's being done about it.

Jacob discussed his views on the institution being designated as an HSI, saying that he does not feel the institution has utilized the distinction to better support Latinx students. Jacob explained

When we got that, I was like, oh that's cool, that's something that is going to attract a lot more Hispanics and that ... I mean they probably ... I'm not gonna lie I, like, I was there when that story like came out through my office since we're in charge of like disseminating all the campus stories and like big news and stuff like that. So, like, someone was like oh yeah this is just for the money because we just want the money and I can completely see that we just did that for the money because I have had a lot of a lot of complaints from my African American friends that are, like, "oh yeah, we're a Hispanic Serving Institute because they want the money. There's not a program like that for African Americans, so, they're not gonna advocate for African Americans more." So, like, to me that was, kind of, what I thought was, like, oh we're just doing this for the money, but I mean I haven't really seen a whole lot of changes with being a Hispanic Serving Institute.

### ***Lack of Representation***

When discussing representation, Joseph explained that he does not feel there is adequate representation for Latinx or queer students at the institution. He explained, I think it's not, like, widely representative because I know, like, I'm not really out there but, like, for other people that might fully be out there trying to express their entire identity I feel, like, they're not safe still because there are those students that aren't aware of these equality, like, laws or equality

standards that that society has set and I feel like we still need to actually express that and make the campus more geared towards that realm of having everyone included.

Al explained that he did not meet anyone at the institution who spoke Spanish, saying “So, being Latinx, I didn't ... I don't really meet anybody my first year, my entire first year, that even spoke Spanish.” He went on to explain

It wasn't until my second year that I found a faculty member that, not only was identified as Latinx but also spoke Spanish and she could help me a lot with you know with the things I needed help with.

Thinking about the queer community, Al explained “I don't know how many people on campus are queer or part of the LGBT community but I can tell you that for the most part, most people identify or most people on campus identify as straight or heterosexual.” Storytelling Artist recounted his experience seeing Ally stickers for the first time and learning that one of his professors was gay. While this representation was a positive thing for Storytelling Artist, he explained that he wished there was more representation, saying

For the longest time, my like my freshman and sophomore year, I would see the ally stickers on the professors doors and I was like I'm like I was always curious because I was I would always wonder if that was something that they were required to put or if that was something that they chose to do. And I do have I know of one, one of my professors that is, that identifies as gay and I'm sure I've had several more but just having the one that is for sure, is ... I wouldn't say it's enough representation but it definitely it was definitely very

comforting to know that there are people especially in the ... that had been in the profession that I want, who is a person of color, who happens to be gay, and is still successful.

Trevor Martinez discussed how he feels there is a lack of Hispanic representation at the institution. He explained,

In terms of employees, I don't see a lot of Hispanics. At least in terms of, I'm currently a math major double minor in biology and self-infections and I don't feel like there are any real Hispanics in those departments. I've seen some in other departments like the languages and stuff but not really in any department that I am super familiar with.

Similarly, Josh expressed that he has not encountered a professor who holds the same identities that he does, saying

I haven't ran into a professor or had a professor with the same identities as me. I know there ... At my school they're trying to ... not enforce, but, kind of, like, push towards bringing in different cultures. Bringing in all these different staff, like, Latinx, or African Americans, you know, they're trying to make it more diverse rather than it being Whitewashed, and I really appreciate that.

But personally, for me I have never met a professor with the same [identities].

Jack explained that he feels unrepresented both as a Latinx student and as a queer student, saying

On the ethnic side, on the racial side, I feel very unrepresented as far as not seeing a lot of Latinx or Latin@ people in teaching positions. Of course, I'm a graduate student, so my view is a little bit narrow as I'm only in one

department, I'm not having to core classes around campus so specifically the music department, a lot of Caucasian professors that I don't really see myself represented in. I also don't know my professors' sexual identity. It's not that we discuss that too often but by what I can tell, I don't really see many queer professors, even in the music, there are some queer professors that that I know of but I would say maybe in the music department you'd probably see a large representation of minority groups such as people who identify as queer and minorities but I still feel a little, if I'd have to say seeing myself in my professors, I would say that's a little bit more on the minimal side.

Michael expressed similar feelings as Jack, saying

I mean when it comes to representation, I'm not too sure if this is the department that I'm in or if it's across the whole campus, from what I've heard it is but I don't really see that many people that look like me or I guess that I identify with in any kind of major roles. And the role that you do see us in of course are almost like your stereotypical roles like custodian or kind of the maintenance part of the staff. Yeah. When it comes to just like some of the policies that are aimed towards being like people like me on campus or even on the faculty I just there's nothing really there I know that there are diversity initiatives in place to try to recruit new talent. It's also to recruit students with diversity. But I just, I feel like it very it's still behind.

Michael went on to explain his experience as a student and as a staff member with regard to feeling that the institution is lagging behind in representation, stating

Well for me I guess I, kinda, think it from looking at this from two perspectives because one I am a student but I'm also a staff member and I have other students who are from minority groups you have told me that they just don't feel a presence at the university they still feel like they ... that there's a lack of representation and I agree I think that it's very ... that I'm very fortunate that since I am person of color and a person who is not you know you're regular like heterosexual male that so many of these students engage with. I do get a lot of students who come and talk to me and they confide in me and they tell me that the representations just not here yet compared to some other universities across the country and I get that and I sympathize with them because I felt that way when I was here in undergrad back in 2013 and even back as a grad student I still see that some changes have been made but I guess not as much as one would like to see. And so that's what I guess I'm saying is that here we are in 2020 and we're still lagging behind a little from the rest of the country. And just also that sense of how minority groups and how the discussion about diversity is had at the campus. I've been in some classrooms and some meetings where there's still a sense of like members of faculty and staff tolerating the discussion about diversity and not really embracing it. They're, like, well we need to discuss this because students feel this way so they make it sound like it's an obligation rather than a privilege to get to discuss that and actually do something about it so those that perception of the conversation needs to change and so that's what I mean that it's just it's still behind in times.

Nathan echoed the sentiment that there is a lack of representation when describing the campus community as “straight, White, country.” Nathan went on to describe the level of representation, saying

You know, I mean considering both of those identities, I don't really ... of course I see, you know, the stickers that say, like, safe space, or like, I'm an ally like out across campus and that kind of makes me feel nice but other than that it's hard to put names and faces to communities here. [...] well I think even less would go for a Latinx identity. I haven't really seen much of any sort of representations. Again, for me a lot of the time representation is more about names and faces.

Jacob echoed Nathan's comment, saying

We have a very White college. And that doesn't necessarily mean that's because our selection process ... it might just be out of circumstances, a lot more Caucasians apply to [Institution in Southwest Region of U.S.] than other, than other what's the word I'm looking for ... other ethnic groups that are applying.

Jacob went further to describe his experiences with representation between his former on campus job and his current on-campus job, saying

At my old job, like, it wasn't a big deal that much because a lot of people in the office that were gay that worked in hospitality at the [Building 1 at Institution]. But now I work at the [Building 2 at Institution] in the [Institutional Communications and Marketing] and no one identifies as that and I just really work with a lot of more conservative people and I really don't

know how they would react to that and I've had a lot of experience where people just completely change their perception of me and I really don't want that in a professional setting at all.

### ***Perceived Community***

Lucian explained that he felt the campus climate was one that promoted a sense of community. He explained that the combination of institution traditions and organizations promoted a “sense of unity that everyone is part of the same campus.” Lucian went on to discuss how he felt a sense of community among others in his major. He explained

Well, being a musical theatre major it's a little easier for me because the majority of theatre majors in general are usually, or design majors even, are very accepting of pretty much anything and so I've never really ever been one to sort of like hide my sexuality or any of my identities really.

Similar to Lucian, Storytelling Artist described his experiences within the theater department, saying

I'm in the theater department and we're pretty close net. Like, I might not be friends with everyone but I know that everyone there would be willing to work, work with you or help you out in pretty much any sort of situation.

However, Lucian explained that he still feels that he must refrain from fully expressing his Latinx identity, saying

Like, if I'd start saying that with my friends they'd be, like, my theater friends, and I'm, like, oh yeah pero like and they'll, like, they might think it's funny, they'll be, like, haha he spoke Spanish. And I'll be, like, yeah verses it's just

something normal that I do with some of my friends at home on the phone or whatever and we'll just be talking and telling stories that's just, like, a specific example too.

Joseph explained that his desire is to have a campus climate that is accepting and affirming where students can be their true self. Nathan echoed Joseph, stating

I guess we talked about representation earlier and just seeing names and faces and like having an immediate idea of like who I could contact or where I could go or that sort of thing right off the bat other than, you know, me having to do more searches on my own. Of course, that's part of being in the community. You have to look and search and find people. But, I guess, if it was a bit more easier to do. That would probably help more people from the get go.

Trevor Martinez discussed how attending an HSI makes him feel welcomed and stronger in his Latinx identity. He stated, "as somebody who is Hispanic and identifies with that culture pretty strongly, it makes me feel really welcomed and it does make me feel better about coming here." Similarly, Josh described the Latinx community at the institution, saying

The Latinx community at campus is growing and it's amazing to see like you know like the students kind of live out that, I guess, that idea of the American dream, you know, getting a college education, getting a degree, making your parents proud, and just going out there and doing what you do.

Jack expressed feeling accepted among his department, saying

Based on the identities that I hold, I would say that luckily I'm in a department that's very affirming and very loving and a lot of the professors do go above

what some other professors might, many of them paraphernalia and iconography on their doors that expressed that they are allies of that they're accepting of all sorts of ethnicities, gender identities, sexual identity and whatnot.

Al explained that when it comes to a sense of community, he feels that part of the responsibility of being Latinx and queer is to stand up when you see another member of the community “being discriminated against or something like that.”

### ***Passing***

Lucian discussed the concept of passing and how at times, he can use this to his advantage within theater, saying

But just a based off of appearances, when I go to auditions and stuff and I put, you know, I'm Hispanic or Latino and then I'm not able to put special skills can speak Spanish, you know. It's something that, like, is a bonus, kind of, being mixed because like I said I can process either or. But I will say, depending on what show I'm auditioning for will sometimes, like, in university I was just in *Hay Fever* and it was British and it was in the twenties and I was very White, you know, like, so to speak and you know it might not be right but I sort of play off of that to my advantage especially in terms of my career for designing choreography.

Similar to Lucian, Storytelling Artist attempted to be perceived as White and as straight, saying

So, I've been very conscious that I do have like darker skin but I tried to kind of, I try, I think I tried to overcompensate with my personality since I wasn't, I

am, I'm half, so, half of me is White and I've tried to, like, embrace the quote unquote White side of my ethnicity to try and you know blend in. As far as being gay, I tried to hide that for the longest time.

Joseph emphasized his desire to pass as heterosexual, saying “Like trying to just avoid. I just don't want people to realize it [sexuality]. So, I just avoid talking about this such things.” Trevor Martinez explained that he attempts to act more straight.

Similarly, Nathan described his attempts to pass as straight, saying

I guess it's just more out of, like, safety that I choose to, I don't know, wear certain things aren't too, you know, out there. Or say choose to say a little bit less or do a little bit less in the community

Echoing the statements of Trevor Martinez and Nathan, Gallego discussed his desire to fit in with the “stereotypical mindset” of how a man should act and be perceived.

Jack explained that he is in a unique position in that he is bisexual and in a relationship with a cisgender womxn. Jack explained that his relationship and experience may be discounted in the sense that he can pass as heterosexual. However, he discussed that he attempts to avoid this misconception, saying

So, being recently identifying as queer has given me a bit of a narrow perspective and the other perspective that I have to and the other facts that have to be aware of is currently I am a bisexual person who is dating a woman and we would be and I hesitate to say things like I'm in a heterosexual relationship because I'm still bisexual I am in a in a relationship with a woman who was also bisexual so we're both queer people who have chosen each other you know we haven't chosen a side, we haven't chosen a sexual orientation, we

have chosen people, we just happen to both be sexually attracted to male and female gender identities and so we chose each other and so my perspective is a little bit narrow because when I did come out we were dating at the time so for many people as I've come out and told them, their perception hadn't changed too much because I am in a for all intents and purposes, a heterosexual quote unquote relationship. I've had some people question my sexuality because of that but specifically speaking about being Latinx in the Latin@ in the queer community I'm aware of some of the biases that happen with preferences and whatnot and I can speak to those more through my other Latinx friends who have been in the in the queer community longer than me and some of the discrimination and the discrimination that's veiled as quote unquote preferences to them. And even some of the fetishes, fetishization that they received by being a Latin@ person in the queer community. But personally, I have minimal experience with that.

### **Summary of Research Question Two**

When considering how attending an HSI promoted or hindered identity development for queer Latinx men, respondents expressed that the institutional status as an HSI did not promote or support their identity development. Respondents were not aware of resources or institutional initiatives available to Latinx students.

Additionally, respondents reported feeling that there was a lack of representation at the institution with regard to both their Latinx and queer identities. However, respondents discussed establishing a sense of community or a desire to have a community and the benefits of building connections or seeing representation had on their experiences and

academic achievement. When it came to their expression of their identities, some respondents discussed attempting to pass as either White or as heterosexual in an attempt to better fit in with the dominate social group. This impacted the respondents' identity development in that they were unable to incorporate their sexual identity into their daily life, failing to reach synthesis.

### **Research Question Three**

Research question three explored what institutional resources queer Latinx men utilized at HSIs. Respondents expressed the utilization of a wide variety of institutional resources based on the identities they held. The four emerging themes were: LGBTQIA Office, Student Organizations, Health and Wellness, and Individuals with Similar Identities. The themes are defined as follows: 1) LGBTQIA office refers to any events, activities, or resources directly affiliated with the institution's LGBTQIA office, 2) student organizations refers to organizations and resources available to students at the institution, 3) health and wellness refers to any resources and programs directly affiliated with the students' overall health and wellness, whether physical or mental, and 4) individuals with similar identities refers to the use of other individuals who hold the same identity as a resource to further identity development and engagement.

#### ***LGBTQIA Office***

Jack discussed being involved with the LGBTQIA office and volunteering with their events in order to be engaged, saying

So, I've always participated and gone to events hosted by the different LGBTQ organizations, I volunteered for a few, I sung and conducted a choir for the trans

remembrance vigil held on campus, I also performed a piece with my guitar and singing for world aids day which is another event put on by campus organizer, so volunteering my time for those sorts of things, inviting people to those sorts of things, you know is one way that I've engaged in the community that way.

Jacob explained that like Jack, he was involved with the LGBTQIA office, saying "I'm not really part of SGA [GSA], I will say that I have volunteered at the office of LGBTQIA. I knew a few people that work there. Other than that, I don't really interact most." Nathan explained that he was aware of events put on by the LGBTQIA office, but he just has not attended any due to not wanting to go alone and starting a job that took up most of his free time. He explained

I think the first year or two we ended up going to like the drag shows and that sort of thing. I know they had like number of productions. Of course, the Pride week. I've seen about the summit. I think I actually took a picture of a poster that I saw. But yeah, I just haven't gone.

Gallego expressed a desire to become more involved with the activities and events put on by the LGBTQIA office. In thinking of resources that the LGBTQIA office could develop to better support the queer community on-campus, Jack explained

I think a resource that might be good would be some sort of group that combined LGBTQIA identifying students with professors and with administrators and so those voices could be heard a little bit more directly and on a more normal basis and making sure that the LGBTQ students are being represented and being protected and not because we can't protect ourselves but because, you know, systemically there are things in place that discriminate against different

identifying people and the people of different races. So, having some sort of inclusivity and there's the word, coalition, if you will between administrators and students, I think would be a benefit. I don't know how likely that is to happen. Again, being on a conservative campus, I don't know but I think that might be to our benefit.

In a similar manner, Michael explained that he feels it would be beneficial if the LGBTQIA office created a group where queer graduate students have the opportunity to interact with institutional administrators. He stated

I guess like either events for people to go to that people that are like minded or, you know, same background could get together and meet. I guess, like I said, because I'm in grad school, if we had some of those organizations or opportunities for grad students, I feel like that would be helpful just because we don't. Which I mean, I get it, grad students are more the professional route, so we have, you know, we have jobs that we go to, we don't really have time for organizations but I mean if there were some people on campus who set up a night to just go have dinner and it was like the LGBTQ organization functioned it, that would be, you know, a step because you're going, you're meeting people who are the same level as you, I guess and getting to socialize. So, I guess just seeing organizations for different groups.

Joseph explained that through his involvement a prevention education and promotion of well-being program (Health Promotion in Higher Education, HPHE), they were working to increase the level of awareness of the LGBTQIA office, saying

They were like we need to include LGBT, like, in our presentations or in our tabling. Because the LGBTQ is at the [Building 3 at Institution] and they really don't get much, they don't get appreciated as much as [HPHE], as [HPHE] does. So, [HPHE] will be able to probably oh by the way there's the LGBT community over here but I feel like we're gonna start being more inclusive.

### *Student Organizations*

Lucian described an LGBTQIA centered student organization, PrideSTEM, that he was not aware of before, saying “So, probably speak more about that but again going back to my ex-boyfriend, he said he was in PrideSTEM and I was like, what’s PrideSTEM. And he’s like, well you know, STEM, like the engineering and science technology.” Michael discussed how he has become involved on-campus in an effort to provide support to other first-generation students, explaining

My personal experiences, like, they've driven my involvement with campus by, for one, for like graduate school ambassadors, I know that I had a hard time here because sometimes it was hard to identify with other people or, you know, find a group that I can associate with and just help with guidance just in college life in general. So, with that with those past experiences I wanted to become an ambassador because I wanted to help students who are like me who they're taking on a new journey in their life and they need guidance from someone who has a similar background or similar life experiences and so that's what drove me to do that. Same thing with becoming an advisor, I know that when I was an undergrad student at [Institution in Southwest Region of U.S.], I didn't really feel like I knew how to navigate college life, especially not whenever I didn't know

myself truly first. Because I started at [Institution in Southwest Region of U.S.], you know, in the closet and then graduated finally like being accepting of myself and I know that there's some other students who go through that or if they're not even going that, they're going through other hardships and so when the opportunity to become an adviser came up I really wanted to do it because I wanted to be that resource who could also help students navigate through college life.

He went on to further explain how being involved has been of benefit, stating

I just I've got to meet a lot of new or new people and make a lot of new connections that I don't think I got I would have gotten a chance to had I not done the program. So, it's been very helpful both academically and socially because some of those networks include other students from other departments but also some Deans and some professors from other programs as well. So, it's been, it's been beneficial.

Michael also mentioned the campus first-generation organization and the Gender and Sexuality Association (GSA) as beneficial resources. Nathan expressed an interest in GSA, but stated he was hesitant to attend meetings due to a fear for his safety, saying "I guess still in my mind it was a bit of a ... I don't know if you're the most safe." Jacob explained that he believes the GSA is an excellent resource, saying

I feel like SGA [Sexuality and Gender Association] is a really great resource because we can meet people that are very similar to you. Like, they have the same sexuality as you. They've been through the things which you've been which a lot of people don't know. Don't know what those things are.

Joseph explained his reasoning for getting involved with various student organizations, saying “on campus, I like to interact by going to the events they post, like, because they give out a lot of free stuff.” Joseph explained that he is actively involved in several first-generation organizations, TRIO Student Support Services, McNair Scholars, and First-Generation Programs. He went on to explain that being involved in McNair Scholars and the First-Generation Programs has been beneficial and that the organizations “can offer their experiences” and get “us involved in certain things that we wouldn’t really be aware of if you weren’t in the organization or as first generation minority students.” Jacob explained that he believes the First-Generation Program would be beneficial but that it is underfunded. While Trevor Martinez mentioned being a member of multiple Latinx student organizations, he expressed a desire to be involved in some organizations geared towards first-generation students. He went on to explain that he would like there to be a group dedicated to helping students socialize, saying “A group that helps them talk to people or socialize or get out more would really benefit some of the people here who are super smart but just are terrible at communication and making friends” With regard to the Latinx student organizations, Jacob explained that he was not involved with them, saying

I've never really interacted with them since I've been preoccupied with other organizations. And I haven't really found a need to interact with those organizations like so. But I know there's some people that would love it to talk to more Hispanics to feel more at home especially with that friend I was telling you about. She'd like she did join that and she felt a little bit more home with that.

Jacob explained that in addition to being active within various student organizations, he is an officer in a student organization. He stated

And then working for my organization the well that's just like it's a national organization, a chapter of a national organization so we have conferences, we hold like international conferences from our bigger professional organization. We go to leadership rallies. We have guest speakers, so, like, I network like crazy during those events. I just go up and meet new people. Even some of my professors have gotten me interviews with people like one of the senior vice presidents from [Public Relations Company]. I had the honor to, like, talk to him and interview him and possibly and he said yeah keep talking to me and then we can possibly find you a job in the future. So, it really hasn't affected my possibility of finding a job or being academic successfully or being successful in anyway.

While Storytelling Artist mentioned being involved with GSA, he explained that he was not involved with any Latinx organizations because “I never really thought I was Latino enough to, kinda, reach out for reach out and be a part of those Latino organizations.” Storytelling Artist contributed his not thinking of himself as Latino enough to “growing up in a really gentrified White community” and being the only Hispanic person at his school and not growing up embracing the Latinx culture.

Nathan, however, expressed that he is not aware of any resources for queer Latinx students, saying “in terms of resources you set aside for people who are queer people, who are Latinx, I haven't really used any sort of resource. Maybe that's just me not educating myself about what's available, but yeah.” However, Nathan went on to

explain that he was not overly concerned about his lack of involvement because “I came in by my own bootstraps and I’ve been pushing along by my own bootstraps. I haven't really seen anything that affected me in that in that sense.” Likewise, Josh expressed that he was not aware of resources available to him on campus, stating “I don't really use utilize any resources on campus. I'm guessing just from the lack of information and the lack of knowledge that I have about it. So, I don't really know what resources I have on campus.” Josh went on to explain that he desired identity-based organizations where he could socialize and express his identity, saying

I feel like getting involved with a culture that I know and I'm familiar with will really help me, you know, to be comfortable there and being able to express myself fully. With my gay identity, I think I would love to enjoy just getting a group together and just discussing, you know, the problems that we face or the fears that we have or people just motivating each other, you know, you can get through this, you know, you're stronger than what you are and everything.

Al explained that he also felt there was a lack of available resources, saying

You know there isn't a lot of LGBT groups on campus. There aren't a lot of different theater groups on campus. There's just the theater, the College of Theater, there's the LGBT club, and there's just this one person who helps us in any financial aid who speaks Spanish and we're comfortable with.

### ***Health and Wellness***

Three of the eleven respondents indicated they used the health and wellness services and that their experiences were positive. Lucian explained “I know like [HPHE] does a few things about different sexualities and stuff and they're very

accepting and just, I think that's I think is pretty cool.” Joseph described his experiences with [HPHE], saying “I feel like it’s been really positive for me because I’ve been able to join an organization that really accepts everyone in whole. It’s called [HPHE].” He went on to further describe the resource, stating “I’m really able to connect to students that are open minded and they’re able to, like, see different perspectives other students may not be able to see”

Lucian also explained that he utilized the health services, saying “Student health services. I had a really bad, I say I had an STI scare.” Additionally, Lucian expressed satisfaction with how the student mental health center reached out to him preemptively, saying

I will say though that, once I filled out, you know, the thing that they had first patients do to evaluate, a quick evaluation I got called at least maybe three times a month, four times a month saying, hey, our records show that you’re at high risk for depression please reach out to us to talk with you and you know you don’t have to and eventually they stopped. I haven’t gotten a single one this semester. But I’ve also gotten help.

In addition to Lucian, Michael explained that he also finds the health center and mental health services to be beneficial. Storytelling Artist expressed that he has a positive experience using HPHE, the health center, and the mental health services, saying

I definitely use [HPHE] and the wellness center for testing and like STD prevention and those kinds of things. And then in addition to that, I’ve used the

mental health facilities as well, the counseling center. Those have all been pretty helpful. Especially when I was like struggling with my identity.

Gallego explained that his main involvement in on-campus is with the institution's recovery center. He explained "I'm more involved with the, I guess the recovery aspect of the [Institution in Southwest Region of U.S.] community. But generally, I'm either involved in, like, service projects or well yeah, that's all for me. I'm mostly involved with the recovery community"

### ***Individuals with Similar Identities***

Lucian discussed his experience with a professor who shared a similar identity, saying

In terms of staff, I ... my professor is ... one of my professors is gay. Openly gay. Introduced us to his boyfriend in one of the classes, you know, and again it's theater. My voice lessons teacher is lesbian and polyamorous, you know, so I think that's pretty interesting because ... not necessary for me per se, but like I said, in my class specifically it's all White and cisgender men and women. I know for a fact that five of them did not know what the word polyamorous meant. And I thought it was interesting that they got to learn something, you know, I mean, because that's also something that I've recently discovered about myself that I might very well ... that I'm very well polyamorous and so now I am able to explain that to the art school that they know about that just in case you know that it comes further down the road and it's not some.

Similarly, Jack discussed connected with a friend and learning about the identity of biromantic and further developing his own identity through the connection and conversation with this friend, saying

But in any case, so my journey started with, it's, kinda, hard to say where it started. Again, it's something that has always been a part of me and I've known so I would be the earliest I started was feeling and have a conversation with a friend who identified as this new word that I heard which was biromantic and that was, the way they described it to me was someone who was, you know attracted to one gender identity, oh, well sorry ... was sexually attracted to one gender identity but was romantically attracted to another gender identity and that really resonated with me because I definitely had a strong emotional romantic feelings for men before.

He went on to explain that having conversations with others who hold similar identities was a valuable resource, saying “being educated by people in the community has probably been my greatest resource.”

### **Summary of Research Question Three**

When considering what institutional resources queer Latinx men utilized at HSIs, respondents discussed being involved with the institution's LGBTQIA office. Respondents also described a series of organizations they participated in, ranging from GSA to the Hispanic Student Society. Respondents were able to actively present their Latinx and queer identities and incorporate their sexual identity in their daily life while on campus. Additionally, respondents expressed a desire for the development of additional identity-based resources that promoted engagement and socialization. In

addition to participating in identity-based organizations, respondents explained that the use of the health services and mental health services were beneficial to their overall satisfaction and identity development. Lastly, it was explained that in addition to utilizing institutional organizations, engaging with others who held similar identities was a way to learn about various identities and to build connections.

### **Summary**

This qualitative study examined the experiences of queer Latinx men at a four-year postsecondary institution designated as an HSI in the Southwest region of the U.S. Specifically, this study looked at the experiences of marginalized students, their perceptions of their campus climate, and the impact of the intersectionality of the identities they hold on their experiences and identity development. A total of eleven participants were interviewed. When considering how the intersecting identities of sexuality, race, and gender impact the campus experiences of queer Latinx men, respondents expressed that masculinity, online research, heteronormativity and homophobia, and racism played into their identity development and experiences. With regard to how attending an HSI promoted or hindered identity development for queer Latinx men, respondents expressed that the institutional status as an HSI did not promote or support their identity development. Institutional resources queer Latinx men utilized at HSIs consisted of being involved with the institution's LGBTQIA office, participating in student organizations such as GSA, the Hispanic Student Society, and First-Generation Programs, utilizing health and wellness resources to promote a holistic experience, and engaging with individuals who hold similar identities.

## CHAPTER V

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the experiences of queer Latinx men at a four-year postsecondary institution designated as an HSI in the Southwest region of the U.S. Specifically, it was the goal of this study to look at the experiences of marginalized students, their perceptions of their campus climate, and the impact of the intersectionality of the identities they hold on their experiences and identity development. This study was guided by the Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development and the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity. Chapter Four presented the themes which were identified during the analysis of the interview transcripts in relation to the research questions. This chapter will synthesize the findings within the context of the prior literature and the conceptual and theoretical frameworks. Following this synthesis, policy implications will be discussed along with the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

### **Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks**

As mentioned previously, the theories and models used within the field of higher education with regard to LGBTQIA students tend to be outdated (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005). Additionally, the models do not fully capture the intersectionality of identities (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005). As such, the Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development and the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity were chosen as the theoretical framework and model to guide this study as they are more inclusive of diverse populations.

### ***Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development***

The Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development outlines the statuses or stages that individuals navigate through during the process of sexual identity development (Dillon et al., 2011). The five statuses are compulsory heterosexuality, active exploration, diffusion, deepening and commitment, and synthesis (Dillon et al., 2011). Respondents discussed their experiences as they navigated the stages during their sexual identity development. With the exception of Jack, all respondents began the active exploration stage prior to enrolling in postsecondary education. However, all respondents reported experiences related to deepening and commitment and synthesis during their time at their institution of higher education.

**Active Exploration.** Navigating active exploration is unique to each individual (Dillon et al., 2011). It is the process of purposeful exploring of one's sexual identity. Individuals can enter in and out of the active exploration stage throughout their life (Dillon et al., 2011). Respondents engaged in active exploration through online resources such as BuzzFeed quizzes, journal articles, and forums. Additionally, participants engaged in conversations with individuals who held similar identities and discussed their experiences. Lastly, some participants engaged in active exploration through sexual encounters. Through active explorations, respondents were able to identify their sexual identity and enter the deepening and commitment stage.

**Deepening and Commitment.** The stage of deepening and commitment is the process of increasing commitment to an identity following active exploration (Dillon et al., 2011). Respondents engaged in deepening and commitment by continuing their online research to learn more about their sexual identity. Participants established

friend groups consisting of individuals who held similar identities in order to discuss their experiences and to have a sense of community. Additionally, some participants began actively seeking out relationships and sexual encounters that aligned with their sexual identity.

**Synthesis.** Entering the stage of synthesis consists of individuals aligning their identity and beliefs with their attitudes and behaviors (Dillion et al., 2011). While respondents were able to enter the synthesis stage, they often encountered situations that prevented synthesis. The encountering of heteronormative expectations and homophobia led participants to conceal their sexual identity at times in order to prevent instances of discrimination. However, respondents were able to seek out and engage with queer centered resources on campus and reported openly expressing their sexual identity when on campus.

**Summary.** The experiences of the respondents align with the model developed by Dillon et al. (2011). With the exception of Jack, all respondents began active exploration during adolescents or in their teenage years. Participants began actively questioning compulsory heterosexuality and engaging in goal oriented cognitive and behavioral active exploration. Through the process of active exploration, the respondents were able to establish and understand their sexual identity. As they progressed into the deepening and commitment stage, they continued to question the societal construct of heterosexuality and the concept of masculinity. The participants reported observing examples of heterosexist, patriarchal, and toxic masculinity within their families. While these experiences impacted their overall identity development and progression into the synthesis stage, the participants reported challenging the

societal constructs internally and developing their own understanding of how and beliefs towards sexuality and masculinity. Similar to the findings of Worthen (2018), while the respondents reported a commitment to their sexual identity, they did not fully progress into the synthesis stage until entering postsecondary education. Moving away from home to an environment that provides a more socially and politically diverse climate can promote identity development (Morgan et al., 2011). While at the postsecondary institution, the respondents were able to engage in further active exploration and deepening and commitment, engaging with the campus environment, other queer students, and attending queer centered events and programs. Through this, the respondents began to progress into the synthesis stage (Dillon et al., 2011) as they incorporated their identity and beliefs with their attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, respondents reported aligning their sexual identity with their other intersecting identities, such as race/ethnicity.

### ***Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity***

The Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity presents a model that expands upon Crenshaw's (1989) and (1991) theories of intersectionality (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Identity, a fluid and ongoing experience, is made up of multiple intersecting identities. While some identities, such as race and gender are external, other identities, such as sexual orientation can be hidden. The combination of all individual identities makes up an individual's core identity (Jones & McEwen, 2000). The concept of intersectionality refers to having multiple identities (Crenshaw, 1991) that are intertwined to make up an individual's core identity (Jones, 2009; Jones & McEwen, 2000). An advantage of intersectionality, according to Núñez (2014), is that it "can be

applied in a flexible manner to study how an array of social identities and associated power dynamics shape individuals' life chances" (p. 86).

The intersectionality of these identities can impact an individual's experiences in a particular environment (Jones, 2009). Respondents reported navigating both their queer and Latinx identities. They encountered conflict between their identities. Within the Latinx community, participants explained they felt the need to conceal their queer identity due to heteronormative expectations and homophobia. This negatively impacted their identity development and ability to engage with other queer individuals and strengthen their sexual identity. Within the queer community, respondents encountered racism. Unable to conceal their race/ethnicity, participants were unable to fully engage with the queer community and to actively explore their sexual identity and to incorporate their sexual identity into their daily life.

Prior to enrolling in postsecondary education, the respondents reported encountering heteronormative and homophobic experiences with their families that led to the participants hiding their sexual identity. While the respondents were committed to their sexual identity (Dillon et al., 2011), they were not able to progress into the synthesis stage, aligning their sexual identity and beliefs with their attitudes and behaviors and with their other intersecting identities due to the fear of discrimination. The respondents discussed having difficulties aligning their sexual identity with their Latinx identity due to heteronormative constructs placed upon them by their families due to religious and cultural expectations. Respondents had to navigate their intersecting identities along with the societal constructs as they attempted to engage in identity development.

Entering postsecondary education, the respondents encountered an environment that presented a more socially and politically diverse climate. Through this, the participants were able to engage with other students who held similar identities and had shared experiences. Through conversations and interactions with the campus environment, the participants were able to begin aligning their sexual identity with the other identities they held. This promoted further identity development and progression to the synthesis stage (Dillon et al., 2011). Additionally, Jack and Michael attempted to align their sexual identity, Latinx identity, and identity as graduate students by seeking out resources that specifically supported these identities.

### **Key Findings to Research Questions**

This study was guided by the Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development and the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity. The overall aim of this study was to examine the experiences of queer Latinx men at a four-year postsecondary institution designated as an HSI as established by the U.S. Department of Education's MSI classification in the Southwest region of the U.S. This section will delve into the answers to the research questions for this study. The secondary research questions, research questions two and three, will be answered first and then the primary research question, research question one, will be addressed. The findings outlined in chapter four will be presented along with the existing literature in the field.

### ***Research Question Two***

Research question two examined the ways attending an HSI promoted or hindered identity development for queer Latinx men. It was found that attending an HSI did not promote identity development to the extent expected. Attending an HSI

can promote racial identity and sexual orientation identity development when the institutional environment is both supportive and inclusive (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2020). With the respondents reporting that attending an HSI did not promote identity development, it raises the question of whether there is a disconnect with the institutional resources and/or campus climate and the overall purpose and benefit of an HSI. While the participants engaged in identity development regarding their sexual identity when utilizing queer centered resources, the respondents not engaging in Latinx centered resources could be a contributing factor to the lack of racial/ethnic identity development. The respondents reported a lack of awareness of what resources were available to them, feeling there was a lack of representation at the institution, having a sense of community when around other individuals who held similar identities, and the need to present their identity in a manner that would allow for them to be perceived as a member of the dominant societal group.

The literature explained that HSIs were unique in the sense that unlike other MSIs, HSIs tend to not have an institutional mission statement specifically geared towards providing support for Hispanic students (Laden, 2001). This is a result of many HSIs originally being established as PWIs and becoming HSIs due to a shift in the population of students enrolling (Marin & Pereschica, 2017). The institution in the Southwest region of the U.S. that was selected was originally established as PWI and received the designation as an HSI as a result in increased enrollment of Latinx students. Similar to what has been outlined in the literature, the institution's official mission statement does not reflect providing support for Latinx students. Additionally, the institution is within its first year as an HSI.

Brown et al. (2003) explained that when attending HSIs, Hispanic students tend to feel a sense of community, that the campus environment is supportive of their needs, and that they are more likely to be successful and feel like a valued member of the campus community. Additionally, Laden (2001) highlighted that HSIs tended to develop resources geared toward Hispanic students that were meant to promote academic achievement and higher retention rates. The findings did not fully align with the literature. While the respondents reported feeling a sense of community when they were around others who held a similar identity, they did not feel that they were represented in faculty and staff or the institutional policies. Additionally, the majority of the respondents reported not being aware of resources available to them based on their Latinx identity.

When it comes to sense of community, Lucian explained that he felt the campus traditions promoted the feeling that they were all one community as students. However, this did not fall into a sense of community based on racial or sexual identity. Likewise, Storytelling Artist explained that being part of a department that was supportive helped create a sense of community. While there were feelings of community at times while on campus, this was not contributed to the institution being an HSI. Trevor Martinez was the only participant who equated their attending an HSI as strengthening their Latinx identity. While attending an HSI was not a negative attribute for the respondents, it was not found to be a contributing factor for their feeling connected with their department or the overall institution. Overall, the sense of community came from the participants feeling accepted and included by their

departments and the institution's traditions making them feel like they were a member of the campus community.

While the respondents reported a level of feeling connected with the community, there was not an overall sense of belonging as defined by Strayhorn (2018). Strayhorn (2018) explained that sense of belonging consisted of the feeling of mattering and feeling connected to or with a community. The participants reported feeling connected with the community to an extent based on their status as a student. However, they did not feel connected based on their Latinx or queer identities. Additionally, the respondents did not feel an overall sense of mattering to the institution. The lack of representation among faculty and staff and institutional policy caused the participants to feel like they did not matter to the institution. Hurtado and Carter (1997) explained that Latino students often establish connections with the campus environment through engaging with specific organizations that are related to their values and identities. Additionally, when students maintain a strong connection with the institution, it promotes higher levels of sense of belonging, satisfaction, and academic performance (Garcia & Dwyer, 2018). Garcia & Dwyer (2018) explained that attending an HSI should promote higher levels of sense of belonging among students of color. While the respondents did not report an overall negative perception of the institution, Strayhorn (2018) explained that when students do not have a sense of belonging, their perceptions of the campus environment can decline, leading to lower academic performance and reduced retention rates.

When it comes to representation, Jacob's comment best highlighted the overall feelings of the respondents when he stated, "we have a very White college." Garcia

(2016b, 2018) explained that Latinx students often feel unwelcome and experience negative campus climates when at a PWI. While the participants reported feeling accepted within their departments of study, they did not see faculty or staff who looked like them or who expressed holding a queer identity. Garcia (2016b) explained that while students may see representation and have positive experiences within their department, attitudes towards campus climate are based on perceptions of the institution as a whole and not their department. The respondents explained that at the institution, when Latinx staff members were observed, they tended to be within “stereotypical roles like custodians” or in a maintenance position. When there is a lack of representation among faculty and staff and within the overall curriculum, Latinx students may feel unwelcome on campus (Salinas Jr., 2017). Latinx students feel more connected with their institution and experience higher levels of sense of belonging when they interact with faculty and staff who share the same identities and background (Garcia & Dwyer, 2018). Faculty and staff who share similar identities can provide guidance and support to queer Latinx men as they navigate higher education (Witkowsky et al., 2018). Additionally, by increasing representation and mentorship, institutions of higher education can assist Latinx men with overcoming “educational challenges that are compounded by race, gender, ethnicity, and other identities” (Elliot et al., 2018, p. 46).

When it comes to queer identity, as explained in the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity, sexual identity is not always an identity that is expressed outwardly (Jones & McEwen, 2000). As such, while the respondents reported not being aware of many queer faculty or staff members, there is the possibility that a

higher number of queer faculty and staff members exist at the institutions but do not share their identity. It cannot be said that the institution lack representation with regard to queer faculty and staff due to this identity being one that may not be publicly displayed, however, the participants reported feeling a lack of representation due to not being aware of faculty and staff members who identify as queer. There are many reasons individuals may choose to not disclose their sexual identity. For example, when teaching, while I include an LGBTQIA inclusion statement within my syllabus and engage in queer topics within my course, I do not publicly state my sexual identity due to concerns for safety with teaching in a conservative campus climate. This can inadvertently contribute to students feeling there is a lack of representation of queer faculty and staff members at the institution.

While respondents reported a lack of awareness of resources, it does not necessarily mean the institution is not providing resources geared towards Latinx students. As Josh explained, he contributed it to a lack of information or lack of knowledge of what was available rather than a deficit on the institution's behalf. The lack of awareness is likely associated with, in part, a lack of marketing by the institution and a lack of attention from the students. This is supported by Nathan's comment saying, "nobody's ever reached out and said hey, new resources are available for you or hey, you're this, you're that, come out and do this or that or we're here to help you with this or that" and Lucian's comment, "I don't care unless they affect me." In addition to a lack of awareness of what resources are available, Al, Storytelling Artist, and Gallego all stated they were not aware that the institution was an HSI. All three participants first enrolled at the institution prior to it receiving the

designation as an HSI. It must be noted that the institution is within its first year as an HSI. As such, there is a possibility that the institution has not had ample time to develop and market resources. However, as noted later, the majority of the respondents indicated they were unaware of resources that currently existed at the institution.

With institutions receiving the designation as an HSIs due to a change in student enrollment (Brown et al., 2003; Garcia, 2018; Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015; Garcia et al., 2019; Núñez et al., 2016) and often also being a PWI (Lara, 2017; Villarreal, 2014), this raises a concern that institutions seek an HSI designation in an effort to receive federal funding allocated in the HEA (Benitez, 1998) for HSIs. Of the eleven respondents, two stated they questioned the institution's motives for seeking an HSI designation. Michael stated he believed "it's just an award or recognition that we wanted to gain just to say we have it" and Jacob stated, "someone was like oh yeah this is just for the money because we just want the money and I can completely see that we just did that for the money." While it would not be appropriate to imply the institution sought an HSI designation simply for recognition and increased federal funding, it is important to share the concerns of the Latinx students enrolled at the institution. This belief that the institution's motives may not have been genuine can be contributed back to the lack of awareness of resources available to Latinx students. If students are unaware of how an institution is utilizing federal funds meant to support them, there is a high likelihood they will begin to question what the institution is using the money for and why the institution sought out the funding. Joseph was one of three respondents aware of Latinx centered resources available to them. He listed a few

institutional resources, such as TRIO Student Support Services, McNair Scholars, and First-Generation Programs. While these programs are not solely for Latinx students, as Joseph explained, a large number of the students who participate in the programs are Latinx. Additionally, Trevor Martinez mentioned multiple Latinx student organizations that were available at the institution. Based on comments from Joseph and Trevor Martinez, it is apparent that the institution does offer resources and that the remaining participants are unaware of what is available. This brings into question whether a lack of marketing and outreach by the institution is the problem or if the students are not seeking out information or are ignoring institutional efforts to engage with them.

However, when it comes to what it takes to become an HSI, the requirements do not require that institutions have a mission statement or established resources intended for promoting Latinx student success. Any postsecondary institution which obtains a minimum enrollment of 25 percent of undergraduate Hispanic students and at least 50 percent of whom are considered low-income can apply for and obtain an HSI designation (Garcia, 2016a, 2016b, 2018; Garcia & Cuellar, 2018; Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015; Garcia et al., 2019; Núñez et al., 2011; Núñez et al., 2016). Garcia et al. (2019) explained that there is not an official requirement focused on the serving part of the HSI name. While an institution may have genuine intentions by becoming an HSI, the minimum threshold for becoming an HSI does not require or consider this. Garcia (2016a) and Garcia & Okhidoi (2015) discussed that HSIs have been criticized as being Hispanic-enrolling instead of Hispanic-serving since they often do not focus on producing equitable outcomes for Latinx students. The requirements should be

higher and incorporate a mandate for the institutions to demonstrate a history of service towards the Hispanic community and efforts to promote academic success for Hispanic students. Garcia et al. (2019) discussed that HSIs should “produce equitable outcomes for Latinxs” and matriculations rates (p. 747). However, HSIs are not producing equitable outcomes for Latinx students (Garcia, 2018). With most HSIs also being PWIs, it is critical that an effort be made to ensure the institutions are dedicated to serving their Latinx students, ensuring resources to promote academic success that meets their unique needs and an inclusive and accepting campus environment. When an institution receives an HSI designation but does not actively develop and offer resources that promote academic success for Latinx students, the purpose of an HSI is not being met and the needs of Latinx students are being discarded for an institution’s marketing strategy.

When considering the concept of passing, respondents expressed situations where they either attempted to be perceived as White or as heterosexual. The situations were not always related to concerns for safety. Lucian, for example explained that he would attempt to pass as White in an effort to get better parts in plays. Considering identity, it is not always possible to conceal certain aspects of one’s identity, such as race/ethnicity (Jones & McEwen, 2000). However, sexual identity is an identity that can be concealed (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Joseph, Storytelling Artist, Trevor Martinez, and Nathan explicitly stated they attempted to pass as straight while Gallego discussed attempting to match the societal expectations set for men. The respondents indicated their attempts to conceal parts of their identities depending on the situation and what environment they were in.

### ***Research Question Three***

Research question three explored what institutional resources queer Latinx men utilized at HSIs. It was found that while there was a lack of awareness of Latinx centered resources, respondents were aware of and participated in queer centered resources. The participants were knowledgeable of events, activities, and resources that were offered by the institution's LGBTQIA office. While knowledge of and engagement with student organizations primarily centered around queer organizations, there was engagement with Latinx organizations by a few participants. Respondents discussed utilizing the institution's health and wellness services. Participants also mentioned engaging with individuals who held similar identities as a means to further their identity development and engagement.

The final stage of the Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development (Dillon et al., 2011) is synthesis, the aligning of identity and beliefs with attitudes and behaviors. The use of and engagement with the LGBTQIA office and related events demonstrates the respondents' achieving the synthesis stage. While there was no discussion of difficulties surrounding the intersectionality of the respondents' identities, being queer and Latinx, with regard to the LGBTQIA office and events, the respondents did express a desire for "some sort of group that combined LGBTQIA identifying students with professors and with administrators" (Jack) or as Michael suggested, a group or events with a focus for queer graduate students. However, it should be noted that the institution attended by Jack and Michael has an organization and events specifically for queer faculty, staff, and graduate students. Neither participant was aware of the organization. This desire by Jack and Michael speaks to

the intersectionality of their queer identity and their graduate student identity. They reported not feeling connected with the queer undergraduate students due to their age and being in a different place in their life, both socially and with their education. As such, they expressed a desire to have an organization that supported their unique needs as queer graduate students. Through the organization and interactions, the desire was to be able to interact with others who held similar identities but to also network with faculty and administrators and to build connections that would allow for open communication regarding the needs of queer students and addressing issues of representation and discrimination on campus.

Considering the student organizations available to students at the institution, respondents were overall unknowledgeable of organizations and resources available for Latinx students while remaining knowledgeable of resources and organizations for queer students. In addition to GSA, Lucian discussed how a particular student organization, a campus chapter of the national PrideSTEM organization, directly benefited queer students in the STEM field. He explained that this organization provides support to queer students who are STEM majors and often lack representation within the field. While every participant was aware of GSA and referred to it as a beneficial resource for queer students because “we can meet people that are very similar to you” (Jacob), none of the respondents continued to engage with GSA after their first few visits. The reasoning varied among the participants; however, it was predominately associated with personality differences between the regular attendees and the participants. It should be noted that participants who attended the same institution in Herridge et al. (2019) reported similar experiences with the regular

attendees. The respondents clarified that their dislike of the group was not due to negative experiences surrounding any identities they hold. While the respondents reported not utilizing GSA, they all felt it was a good resource that was available should they need it.

With regard to Latinx organizations, while the majority of respondents were unaware of organizations and resources, Trevor Martinez, Joseph, and Storytelling Artist mentioned resources available to Latinx students with Joseph and Trevor Martinez actively engaging with the resources. Storytelling Artist explained that when he enrolled at the institution, he did not feel he was “Latino enough” to participate in the organizations. However, through his time at the institution and through the strengthening of his queer identity, he explained that he became comfortable with his Latinx identity. Storytelling Artist’s experience aligns with Garcia et al. (2018) in that attending an HSI and engaging in Latinx centered organizations have been found to promote racial identity development. The remaining participants contributed not engaging with Latinx organizations and resources to not being aware of available resources.

Speaking to the overall lack of representation on campus, Michael explained that he goes out of his way to be visible on campus for both queer and Latinx students. Based off his personal experiences with having difficulty at the institution based off the identities he holds, he explained that he wanted to be a resource and provide guidance to other queer Latinx students and to first-generation students. He addressed the importance of having access to someone with a similar identity, saying “I wanted to help students who are like me who they're taking on a new journey in their life and

they need guidance from someone who has a similar background or similar life experiences.” With a large number of Latinx students being first-generation students (Brown et al., 2003; Garcia & Cuellar, 2018; Núñez et al., 2016), having access to an individual on campus who shares their identity and personal experiences provides a much needed resource for navigating postsecondary education. Creating a sense of community through representation or student organizations helps to establish a sense of belonging. By creating a sense of belonging, students often maintain positive perceptions of the level of support received from their institution and feel connected and respected (Strayhorn, 2018). Student experiences around involvement and engagement are important components of student development and matriculation (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). The level of interaction a student has socially and academically influence their overall level of satisfaction and commitment to the institution (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Additionally, when there is a lack of sense of belonging, individuals are more likely to feel isolated and experience mental health issues (Strayhorn, 2018).

When it comes to health and wellness, the institution’s HPHE program was cited as a beneficial resource in addition to the traditional medical and mental health resources offered at institutions. Having access to HPHE provided students with workshops and events focused on safe sex, alcohol and drugs, and sexual assault/harassment awareness and prevention. Lucian cited the program’s inclusion of sexualities as a beneficial component while Joseph discussed how the program provided a space where he could interact with other students who held similar identities and/or were accepting of everyone. Engaging with HPHE helped strengthen

Joseph's sense of belonging on campus and feelings of acceptance, saying "I'm really able to connect to students that are open minded and they're able to, like, see different perspectives other students may not be able to see." In addition to having access to resources that promote awareness for safe sex, alcohol and drugs, and sexual assault/harassment prevention, access to mental health resources is important for queer students.

Looking at mental health, the rate of depression and anxiety are higher among queer individuals when compared to heterosexual individuals (Iacono, 2019; National LGBT Health Education Center, 2018) and even higher among LGBTQIA students of color (Kulick et al., 2017). Experiencing minority stressors (Toomey et al., 2018) and discrimination as a result of one's sexual identity can lead to lower mental and physical health (Munoz, 2017). Additionally, queer Latinx individuals experience higher levels of depression and social ideations if encountering rejection from their families (Abreu et al., 2020). Bisexual individuals are more likely to experience mental health issues and experience self-harm, suicide, and depression at higher rates than lesbian and gay individuals (Barker, 2015). Depression and anxiety among LGBTQ individuals can lead to thoughts of suicide which are often contributed to the "risk factors stem[ing] from the stress created by living as a stigmatized minority" (National LGBT Health Education Center, 2018, p. 2). Gallego discussed his experiences engaging with the recovery community in order to develop and navigate the identities he holds. He cited the community for being where he is now, being comfortable with his identity and continuing with his education at the institution. Storytelling Artist explained that utilizing the institution's mental health services was

helpful in strengthening his identity and feeling comfortable with both being queer and with being Latinx.

With regard to utilizing individuals with similar identities as a resource, it was explained that engaging with others who held a similar identity promoted a sense of community and allowed for further identity development. Lucian discussed how having professors who were open about their sexual identity helped him learn about demisexuality and polyamory and to discover how his personal identity holds components of these identities. Similarly, Jack learned about the biromantic identity from a friend and through further conversations that promoted his own exploration, he was able to discover that he is bisexual and incorporate his identity into his daily life. Considering the benefit of engaging with others and representation on identity development, Jack's comment "being educated by people in the community has probably been my greatest resource" highlights the importance of having access to resources and organizations that are representative of the identities held by students in order to promote identity development and a sense of belonging.

### ***Research Question One***

Research question one was the overarching question, examining how the intersecting identities of sexuality, race, and gender impact the campus experiences of queer Latinx men studying at HSIs. As queer Latinx men, masculinity played an important role in the respondents' lives. In addition to instances of toxic masculinity, homophobia and heteronormative expectations were placed upon participants by both their families and society. These systems were experienced at different points in the lives of the participants. Each experience along with the point in time in which they

occurred had an impact on the overall identity development and presentation of the respondents' identities. The individual environmental layers, family and higher education, will be discussed with each theme later in this section. Racism was experienced by respondents both on campus and within the queer community. Finally, as queer Latinx men, participants expressed engaging in research and communication to learn about sexuality and to develop their identity.

The respondents discussed how masculinity plays an important role in their identity development and presentation. This aligns with the literature that explained that the gendered socialization Latinx men encounter within a White heteropatriarchal society has a negative impact (Pérez II & Okello, 2017) and that men are taught they must refrain from expressing emotions and feelings (hooks, 2004) and must be domineering and anti-intellectual (Pérez II & Okello, 2017). Additionally, the perception of being feminine often leads to discrimination of queer Latinx men within the Latinx community (Duran & Pérez II, 2019).

The participants explained that masculinity and the concept of machismo impacted their identity development. Traditional gender roles and machismo can conflict with sexual identity (Przeworski & Piedra, 2020). While their initial experiences with masculinity and machismo occurred during their adolescents and teenage years, they continued to see implications of the system while in postsecondary education. As the respondents began active exploration (Dillon et al., 2011), they started actively questioning and challenging the heteronormative and heteropatriarchal constructs that they observed within their families. This included displays of toxic masculinity and expectations of what characteristics and behaviors men should

display. Pérez II & Okello (2017) described these societal expectations as needing to be emotionless and domineering, and demonstrating hypermasculinity (Eaton & Rios, 2017), with hooks (2004) explaining that there was an expectation that men act like their fathers. Additionally, men have been exposed to messages such as boys don't cry throughout their life (Vogel et al., 2011). The respondents discussed disagreeing with the construct of masculinity they were being taught by their families and forming their own beliefs around what masculinity should look like. However, these expectations placed upon them by their families led the participants to not present their sexual identity in order to avoid conflict with their families. Munoz (2017) explained that for Latinx men, it is often considered to be an insult to be viewed as lacking masculinity or as gay. As such, this can cause queer Latinx men to find it more difficult to come out (Munoz, 2017). Jack's discussion of how the role of masculinity in the Latinx culture directly related to his not identifying as bisexual until later in life highlights the role societal norms and expectations play on identity development. Additionally, Nathan discussed the intersectionality of being a queer Latinx man and feeling that he needed to hide his queer identity because he could not express it along with his Latinx identity.

Entering postsecondary education, the respondents were able to engage with an environment that presented a more diverse social and political climate. However, the participants were still required to navigate the environment and how they presented their masculinity. In addition to Storytelling Artist, Gallego, Joseph, Michael, Jacob, and Al all expressing the need to hide their queer identity at times, they explained that they would change how they acted in public, attempting to be perceived as more

masculine or as heterosexual in order to hide their sexual identity. Even while having an understanding and belief of masculinity that differed from the traditional societal construct, the respondents found themselves reverting back to behaviors that were deemed appropriate by society in order to avoid potential discrimination or harassment when interacting with the campus community. Vogel et al. (2011) explained that within the queer community, appearing masculine is also a desired trait. While no participant mentioned machismo pride, the act of avoiding asking for help or seeking out resources (Salinas Jr. & Hidrowoh, 2018) and showing self-sufficiency (Vogel et al., 2011), the attempts to follow traditional masculine expectations could have contributed to the lack of resource utilization. The actions of the respondents to hide their sexual identity at times aligns with Jones and McEwen's (2000) Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity in that while an individual may hold particular identities, certain aspects of identity, such as sexual identity, can be concealed and not displayed outwardly. However, in doing so, the participants were unable to engage in the synthesis (Dillon et al., 2011) of their sexual identity by aligning their identity and beliefs with their behaviors.

Respondents reported experiencing heteronormativity and homophobia both on campus and when interacting with their families. However, they experienced different levels of these systems depending on the environment and how they presented their identities. Queer Latinx individuals are more likely to experience heterosexism due to their sexual identity being viewed as violating cultural and religious norms (Munoz, 2017). The intersectionality (Jones & McEwen, 2000) of the respondents' identities can be seen with how they chose to withhold parts of their identities, such as their

queer identity, when with their families or their queer identity and/or their racial/ethnic identity when on campus to avoid potential discrimination. The intersectionality of the participants' identities contributed to their experiences and how they engaged in active exploration (Dillon et al., 2011) depending on the environment they were in. While the respondents were engaged in active exploration and deepening and commitment prior to entering postsecondary education, their experiences with heteronormativity and homophobia with their families directly impacted their identity development and synthesis. The participants expressed disagreeing with the expectations expressed by their families but felt they had to conform to these expectations and prevent their queer identity from being displayed. In the case of Jack, these experiences directly led to his not engaging in active exploration and developing his identity as bisexual until later in life. Jack's experience directly aligns with Munoz (2017) in that experiencing heterosexism within one's racial/ethnic community can cause a delay in coming out. With approximately 70 percent of Latinx men feeling that being gay would be an embarrassment to their families, rather than directly coming out, queer Latinx individuals will often leave it up to individual interpretation in order to maintain a respect for the family while also living their life openly without ever verbally stating their sexual identity (Przeworski & Piedra, 2020). Additionally, when entering postsecondary education, the respondents expressed feeling a need to meet the heteronormative expectations they were taught even when disagreeing with them and having a different set of beliefs. While the participants attempted to actively challenge these societal constructs while at the postsecondary institution, they still found themselves actively participating in them both in the characteristics they look for in a

partner, i.e. seeking a more masculine partner if they perceived themselves as more feminine, and in how they present themselves within their environment in order to be deemed acceptable by society.

Within a heteronormative society, queer individuals often encounter compulsory heterosexuality expectations. In addition to avoiding acting in a manner that would be considered feminine, the respondents often attempted to conceal their sexual identity in order to be perceived as heterosexual. While all of the respondents expressed a commitment to their sexual identity, they, at times, experienced conflict that prevented them from reaching the synthesis stage (Dillon et al., 2011) and incorporating their sexual identity into their daily life. Both Jacob and Michael discussed instances of homophobia they encountered on campus. These instances of homophobia resulted in their attempting to conceal their sexual identity. The literature (Brown, 2016; Dzurick, 2018; Kosciw et al., 2016; Rankin, 2005) explained that queer students often encounter hostile campus environments due to harassment, violence, exclusion, or discrimination. This can lead to queer students experiencing higher rates of mental health issues (Kulick et al., 2017) or poor academic performance and lower retention rates (Dzurick, 2018; Lewis & Ericksen, 2016).

In addition to experiencing homophobia within the campus community, queer Latinx men experience discrimination within the Latinx community due to their queer identity (Duran & Pérez II, 2019; Eaton & Rios, 2017). This causes conflict between their intersecting identities and leads to attempts to conceal their queer identity. Additionally, this conflict can cause internalized homophobia by queer individuals (Munoz, 2017). Religion plays a large role in heteronormativity that is experienced

(Lassiter et al., 2017). Due to religion playing a large role in the Latinx culture, queer Latinx men are more likely to be exposed to homophobic messages within religion than queer White men (Munoz, 2017). Additionally, religion and spirituality can lead to conflicts between queer Latinx individuals and their fathers due to views around sexuality (Abreu et al., 2020). Experiencing heteronormative expectations within their family and within the Latinx community as a result of religious norms can contribute to a disconnect between queer Latinx men and the overall Latinx community (Peterson & Battle, 2018). The respondents indicated that religion played a role in their families maintaining an expectation that they marry a womxn and have children. However, while Lucian, Nathan, Jacob, and Al expressed negative experiences with religion, Trevor Martinez, Gallego, and Jack explained that religion was beneficial to them and helped with strengthening their sexual identity. Trevor Martinez best explained this, stating “if God didn’t want me to be this way, he wouldn’t have made me this way.” Through instances of homophobia and heteronormative expectations, the respondents expressed situations where they felt they were unable to fully express their sexual identity and incorporate it into their daily life.

In addition to experiencing heterosexism, queer Latinx students often encounter racism (Duran & Pérez II, 2019). Instances of racism can impact the campus racial climate (Kezar et al., 2018). This can lead to negative perceptions of the institution, lower academic performance and student engagement, and a decrease in retention (Kiyama et al., 2015). The respondents expressed instances of racism occurring based on their Latinx identity in the community and within the queer community. The respondents referenced a series of racial based instances that

occurred on campus that were reported in the media and garnered a response from the institution's administration. The participants expressed concerns about whether they were accepted or welcomed on campus as a result. Jacob discussed how the incidents impacted his experience working on campus due to his White co-workers downplaying the incident and "minimaliz[ing] the harm that it was actually doing." Michael also described experiencing racism while working at the institution, stating his co-workers would refer to Latinx students in stereotypical or negative terms. As explained by Jones and McEwen (2000), race/ethnicity are identities that cannot be concealed. As such, individuals are more likely to encounter discrimination based on their race/ethnicity than their sexual identity. Highlighting their perceptions of the institution's campus climate as negative, respondents expressed a desire for the institution to engage in conversations regarding marginalized populations.

While instances of racism occurred on campus, the majority of the respondents discussed that racism within the queer community was a large issue. Eaton and Rios (2017) and Peterson and Battle (2018) explained that Latinx men often experience discrimination within the queer community due to their race/ethnicity. This causes issues for queer Latinx men due the intersectionality of their identities. With race/ethnicity being a publicly visible identity, respondents expressed instances where queer individuals would pass over them or stop talking to them when it was discovered that they were Latinx. In addition to causing conflict between their Latinx and queer identities, this can hinder their ability engage with the queer community in an effort to explore and strengthen their sexual identity.

### As queer individuals navigate the Unifying Model of Sexual Identity

Development, active exploration and deepening and commitment are two critical stages they must go through prior to reaching synthesis. The respondents discussed the need to explore their sexual identity and conduct research in private in order to avoid conflict with their Latinx identity. The majority of research and exploration was done online, through the reading of articles, taking quizzes, or by watching television or movies. Nathan explained how he would use incognito mode in order to hide his research from his parents. In addition to conducting online research, respondents discussed exploring their sexual identity with others, either through having conversations with individuals who held similar identities or through sexual interactions. Through engaging with online resources or with other individuals, the participants were able to explore their identities and strengthen their understanding of the identity they hold as they move towards incorporating their identities into their daily life.

### **Summary of Interpretations of Findings**

When considering how attending an HSI promoted or hindered identity development for queer Latinx men, while attending an HSI did not hinder identity development, it did not promote the strengthening of racial/ethnic identity development for ten of the eleven respondents. Attending an HSI that promotes a supportive and inclusive environment has been found to promote racial/ethnic identity and sexual orientation identity development (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2020). HSIs promote continued racial identity development for students of color (Garcia & Cuellar, 2018; Garcia et al., 2018). Additionally, engaging with Latinx centered organizations

promotes continued racial identity development (Garcia et al., 2018). The finding that attending an HSI did not promote identity development suggests a disconnect with the institutional resources and/or campus climate. However, when looking at the experiences of the respondents based on their queer identities, through engaging with queer centered resources, the participants expressed engaging in identity development focused on their sexual identity. As such, not engaging with Latinx resources can be contributed to the lack of continuous identity development focused on racial/ethnic identity for the ten participants. Respondents were predominately unaware of non-queer resources available to them. There was an overall lack of representation of Latinx and queer faculty and staff members at the institution. This lack of representation and awareness led participants to question whether the institution truly cared about Latinx or queer students and whether the institution sought out an HSI designation simply for the recognition without an intent to support their Latinx student population. Respondents reported attempting to conceal parts of their identity in order to be perceived as members of the dominate social group on campus. This hindered both their identity development in the sense that participants were unable to incorporate their sexual identity into their daily life but also negatively impacted their perceptions of the overall campus climate.

Exploring what institutional resources queer Latinx men utilized at HSIs, respondents were aware queer centered resources, programs, and events at the institution. While respondents were knowledgeable about queer centered resources, there was an overall lack of awareness of Latinx centered resources. Of the participants who were knowledgeable and actively engaged with Latinx centered

resources, it was reported that the resources were beneficial and helped to build connections with others who held similar identities. In addition to engaging with organizations, health and wellness centered resources were found to be helpful in terms of mental health services aiding respondents with their identity development to having access to programs focused on sex education, alcohol and drugs, and sexual assault/harassment awareness and prevention.

When considering how the intersecting identities of sexuality, race, and gender impact the campus experiences of queer Latinx men, respondents expressed that masculinity played an important role in their identity development and expression of their queer and Latinx identities. Negative attitudes towards masculinity caused participants to not identify as their current sexual identity until later in life or to attempt to conceal their sexual identity or pass as more masculine or heterosexual. As such, respondents were unable to enter the synthesis stage (Dillon et al., 2011) due to withholding their sexual identity. In order to explore their sexual identity and to deepen their understanding (Dillon et al., 2011) participants engaged in online research, discussion with other individuals who held similar identities, and sexual exploration. However, respondents encountered conflicts between their queer and Latinx identities with regard to heteronormativity, homophobia, and racism. Encountering homophobia and heteronormativity led participants to conceal their queer identity and to avoid incorporating it into their lives in order to be perceived as heterosexual and to avoid potential discrimination. While certain identities such as sexual identity can be hidden from public expression (Jones & McEwen, 2000), in order to enter the synthesis stage (Dillon et al., 2011), individuals must be able to align

their intersecting identities and integrate these identities into their daily life. Instances of racism on campus led respondents to view the campus climate in a negative light and to have a desire that the administration would engage the campus in conversations regarding increasing representation on campus and decreasing discriminatory incidents. In addition to experiencing racism within the campus community, respondents reported racism within the queer community as a problem. This led to participants feeling that there was something wrong with being Latinx and that they were not welcome within the queer community. As such, this created conflict between their queer and Latinx identities and limited their ability to engage in active exploration and deepening their commitment to their sexual identity.

### **Policy Implications**

This study examined the experiences of queer Latinx men at a four-year postsecondary institution designated as an HSI in the Southwest region of the U.S. Specifically, this study focused on the experiences of marginalized students, their perceptions of their campus climate, and the impact of the intersectionality of the identities they hold on their experiences and identity development. The following are recommendations for institutions to increase the overall campus climate, increase student engagement, academic performance, and retention, and to promote identity development.

Respondents reported that attending an HSI neither hindered nor promoted identity development. However, participants found the institution to be overwhelmingly White and lacking representation. Increasing faculty and staff members who hold Latinx and queer identities will promote representation at the

institution. When there is a lack of representation, students feel, as Joseph stated, they're not safe or that they are just being tolerated as Michael explained. In addition to increasing representation of faculty and staff, institutions of higher education must also incorporate Latinx topics into the curriculum (Salinas Jr., 2017). With increased representation, students are able to see individuals who hold their same identities working in the field that they want to be in and have someone who they can look up to as a mentor and to connect with and discuss shared experiences. When mentors are available, higher levels of engagement and satisfaction are often reported (Elliott et al., 2018). As Storytelling Artist explained, "it was definitely very comforting to know that there are people [...] that had been in the profession that I want, who is a person of color, who happens to be gay, and is still successful."

With regard to awareness of the institutional designation as an HSI and the availability of Latinx centered resources, respondents were predominately unaware. Additionally, there was concern raised over whether the institution's motives for obtaining an HSI designation was solely to provide support to Latinx students or if it was for the recognition and federal funding. While the institution does offer resources for Latinx students, such as TRIO Student Success Services, McNair Scholars, and First-Generation Programs, as mentioned by Joseph, additional effort needs to be placed into marketing the resources and programs to Latinx students. While the institution provides resources, they cannot support Latinx students if the students are unaware of the resources and are not utilizing the resources. Additional effort must be put into increasing awareness and ensuring students know what resources are available and how those resources will benefit them. Institutions can reach Latinx students

through targeted marketing to enrolled students who hold a Latinx identity. In addition to increasing awareness about available resources, an effort should be placed on enhancing transparency with how the institution is utilizing federal funding and meeting the needs of their Latinx students and what initiatives are in place.

Furthermore, it is critical that the definition of what an HSI is and how an institution becomes an HSI is analyzed and redeveloped. While it is important that a percentage of enrolled students are Hispanic, this should not be the only requirement. The purpose of an HSI is to provide support for Hispanic students. In order for institutions to be designated as an HSI, a mandate should be included requiring institutions to have an established mission statement or resources with a specific focus on supporting Hispanic students in addition to the institution demonstrating a history of service towards the Hispanic community. Salinas Jr. (2017) explained that institutions of higher education “have the responsibility to advance and cultivate intelligence with students and communities through research, teaching, and service” (p. 756). To better support Latinx students, institutions should offer orientation programming and materials in Spanish in an effort to engage and support parents who may not speak English fluently (Witkowsky et al., 2018). In order for an institution of higher education to provide appropriate support for Latinx students, the institution must understand the background and perspective of the students and how their intersecting identities impact their experiences (Guardia & Salinas Jr., 2018). Through the redeveloping the requirements for becoming designated as an HSI, Latinx students will have access to institutions with a demonstrated desire to support their Latinx students.

Respondents reported encountering both racism and homophobia on campus. This leads to negative perceptions of the campus climate and impacts academic performance, student engagement, retention, and identity development. To address and decrease instances of racism and homophobia on campus, it is important for institution administration to engage in dialogues with the campus community to learn and understand the concerns, needs, and expectations of marginalized populations on campus. As explained by the participants, it is critical that institutions engage in conversations with marginalized populations regarding institutional policy and practices. Additionally, while safe space trainings and equal employment opportunity (EEO) trainings are already conducted, with EEO trainings mandatory for employees, biases trainings and diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings/workshops should be conducted for students, staff, and faculty. The development of workshops, trainings, and campus events should take an approach that is “holistic, cultural, and utilizes a social justice lens” in order to create an environment that allows for individuals to be authentic (Guardia & Salinas Jr., 2018, p. 148). In addition to holding workshops and trainings, both queer topics and Latinx topics should be incorporated into the overall curriculum to increase representation and knowledge of the topics throughout the campus community. A focus should also be placed on addressing events that have occurred on campus and discussing the impact racial/ethnic and queer discrimination have on campus climate, mental health, and overall satisfaction. Institutional administration should take an active role in maintain conversations with the impacted groups and collaboratively developing inclusive policies and efforts to prevent future incidents.

Institutions of higher education need to place an emphasis on supporting and providing resources to students with multiple marginalized intersecting identities. While providing resources that support specific marginalized identities, such as Latinx resources or queer resources, individual resources cannot always address the unique needs of students with intersecting identities. Additionally, experiencing homophobia within the Latinx community and racism within the queer community can lead to queer Latinx men feeling isolated and unable to engage in resources for either identity due to fear of discrimination. Resources such as student centers and workshops that center on intersectionality would be of benefit to students with multiple marginalized identities. By developing resources that focus on supporting students with multiple marginalized identities, students will have the ability to engage with others who have similar experiences and further their identity development by integrating their identities together in order to engage with their environment as their true self.

### **Limitations**

There are limitations in this study that should be taken into account. First, with a focus placed on one four-year postsecondary institution designated as an HSI in the Southwest region of the U.S., the location of the institution is in a historically conservative region of the U.S. Therefore, the experience of the participants may not reflect the experiences of queer Latinx men in more progressive areas of the U.S. The institution was in its first year designated as an HSI. This presents a unique limitation in that it is unknown whether the lack of awareness of resources can be contributed to the designation being new and the institution has not had ample time to develop and market their resources. However, with most of the participants being unaware of

resources such as TRIO Student Support Services and the First-Generation Programs, which were established at the institution prior to any participant first enrolling, this supports a lack of awareness of resources by the respondents. Additionally, with the institution being a four-year postsecondary institution, the findings are not reflective of two-year institutions. Fourth, the call for participants included any queer identifying Latinx man. However, the identities held by participants were gay, bisexual, queer, and pansexual. There were no transgender individuals who expressed interest in participating in this study. As such, this is a limitation because the voices of all other queer identities were not included in this study. These findings cannot be used to make assumptions about the experiences of all queer Latinx men when only a portion of the identities were included. Fifth, the majority of the participants were students within the College of Visual and Performing Arts. As explained by the respondents, this college is historically more progressive and accepting. As such, the experiences of these queer Latinx men may not match those of queer Latinx men in STEM majors. Finally, data collection was completed during the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic. This presents two possible limitations. First, interviews could not be conducted face-to-face. Therefore, body language and facial expressions could not be noted to supplement the interview transcripts. Lastly, with the institution closing the campus and transitioning courses to an online format, students may have returned home to environments that were unsupportive of their queer identity. As such, some queer Latinx men may have been reluctant to participate or participants may have refrained from sharing as openly as they would have if the interviews were conducted in a different environment due to a desire to conceal their queer identity.

## **Future Research**

Future research should explore how queer Latinx men experience two-year postsecondary HSIs. Only one participant disclosed attending a community college prior to transitioning to the current institution. However, he explained that his previous institution was not an HSI. With HSIs predominately being two-year postsecondary institutions (Benitez, 1998; Núñez et al., 2011) and approximately 22 percent of all community college students being Latinx (Salinas Jr. & Hidrowoh), it is important to examine the experiences queer Latinx men at these institutions in addition to four-year postsecondary institutions. In order to account for the newness of the institution's HSI designation, it is suggested that a follow-up study should be conducted in five years to examine any changes in awareness of resources once the institution has had ample time to develop and market resources. Thirdly, as there were no transgender participants in this study, this is a population of students whose unique experiences are not widely represented in empirical literature. Fourth, with religion and spirituality playing an important role in Latinx culture, future research should explore how these belief systems impact the identity development and the presentation of identity among queer Latinx men. Finally, this study found that respondents sought more masculine partners to balance their perceived feminine behaviors. Further research would benefit examining how heteronormative gender systems are present and navigated within queer relationships.

## **Conclusion**

The U.S. population is predicted to increase to three out of ten people being of Latinx heritage and 25 percent of secondary school students identifying as Latinx by

2030. However, there is a concern that the rate of enrollment for Latinx students will not increase proportionally. While an increase in the national enrollment of Latinx students has occurred, over 50 percent of all Latinx students are enrolled in one of the approximately 200 HSIs, with 53 percent being two-year institutions. As such, it is critical to understand the experiences of Latinx students at these institutions. When looking at how attending an HSI promoted or hindered identity development for queer Latinx men, while attending an HSI did not overtly hinder or promote identity development, there was not an awareness of resources available and there was a clear lack of representation. In addition to improving representation, through increasing awareness of available resources and transparency of institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, student engagement will increase, promoting identity development, academic performance, and retention. Additionally, addressing racism and homophobia occurring on campus is necessary to improve the campus climate. When queer Latinx men encounter instances of racism or homophobia, they are unable to fully engage with their environment and, in some cases, attempt to conceal parts of their identity in order to avoid discrimination. This negatively impacts identity development and prevents their sexual identity from being synthesized into their daily life, allowing queer Latinx men to present themselves to and engage with their environment in an authentic manner. In order to provide a safe and inclusive campus climate, institutions must be knowledgeable of the needs of queer students, Latinx men, and those with intersecting identities. Failure to engage in open communication and address the needs of these students will lead to an increase in isolation and mental

health issues and a decrease in student engagement, academic performance, and retention.

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## **APPENDIX A DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The following terminology defined are utilized in this study. All terminology are categorized with an overarching group. Within each group, terminology are listed in alphabetical order.

### **Academic Based Terminology**

#### ***Achievement Gap***

“Occurs when one group of students outperforms another group, and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant” (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2016a).

#### ***College***

A postsecondary institution providing coursework allowing for the completion of a degree (NCES, 2016b).

#### ***Extracurricular Activities***

“Activities that are not part of the required curriculum and that take place outside of the regular course of study. They include both school-sponsored (e.g., varsity athletics, drama, and debate clubs) and community-sponsored (e.g., hobby clubs and youth organizations like the Junior Chamber of Commerce or Boy Scouts) activities” (NCES, 2016a).

#### ***Faith Based Institutions***

“Theological seminaries and other specialized faith-related institutions primarily offer religious instruction or train members of the clergy” (NCES, 2016a).

***Four-Year Institution***

Institution offering an accredited bachelor's degree through the completion of a four-year program (NCES, 2016b).

***Hispanic Serving Institutions***

“The Higher Education Act, 20 USCA Section 1101a defines a Hispanic-serving institution as an institution of higher education that (a) is an eligible institution; (b) at the time of application, has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students; and (c) provides assurances that not less than 50 percent of the institution's Hispanic students are low-income individuals” (IPEDS, 2016).

***Historically Black Colleges and Universities***

“Accredited higher education institutions established prior to 1964 with the principal mission of educating black Americans” (NCES, 2016a).

***Institution of Higher Education***

Institution registered with ED as a Title IV participant having a minimum of one one-year degree program accredited by a recognized accrediting association (NCES, 2016a).

***Land-Grant Colleges***

“The First Morrill Act of 1862 facilitated the establishment of colleges through grants of land or funds in lieu of land. The Second Morrill Act in 1890 provided for money grants and for the establishment of land-grant colleges and universities for Blacks in those states with dual systems of higher education” (NCES, 2016a).

***Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander***

“A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands” (NCES, 2016a).

***Postsecondary Education/Higher Education***

A formal education beyond the completion of a secondary education degree (NCES, 2016b).

***Postsecondary Education Institution***

An institution with postsecondary education as the main purpose (NCES, 2016a).

***Public School/Institution***

Institution primarily funded through public funding and is governed by public officials (NCES, 2016b).

***Student Activities***

“Programs designed to support and complement the institution's academic mission and enhance the educational experience of students, individually and through student groups. Includes exposure to and participation in social, cultural, recreational, intellectual, and governance activities” (NCES, 2016b).

***Student Services***

“A functional expense category that includes expenses for admissions, registrar activities, and activities whose primary purpose is to contribute to students emotional and physical well-being and to their intellectual, cultural, and social development outside the context of the formal instructional program. Examples include student activities, cultural events, student newspapers, intramural athletics, student

organizations, supplemental instruction outside the normal administration, and student records” (NCES, 2016a).

### ***Tribal Colleges and Universities***

“An institutional classification developed by the Andrew W. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Tribal Colleges and Universities, with few exceptions, are tribally controlled and located on reservations. They are all members of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium” (NCES, 2016a).

### **Racial or Ethnic Based Terminology**

#### ***American Indian or Alaska Native***

“A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment” (NCES, 2016a).

#### ***Asian***

“A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam” (NCES, 2016a).

#### ***Black or African American***

“A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa” (NCES, 2016a).

#### ***Hispanic or Latino***

“A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race” (NCES, 2016a).

***Racial/Ethnic Group***

“Classification indicating general racial or ethnic heritage” (NCES, 2016a).

***Two or More Races***

An individual identifying as two or more race groups (NCES, 2016a).

***White***

“A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa” (NCES, 2016a).

***Sexuality or Gender Based Terminology***

***Ally***

“A person who is not LGBTQ but shows support for LGBTQ people and promotes equality in a variety of ways” (Human Rights Campaign (HRC), 2018).

***Androgynous***

“Identifying and/or presenting as neither distinguishably masculine nor feminine” (HRC, 2018).

***Aromantic***

“A romantic orientation generally characterized by not feeling romantic attraction or a desire for romance” (UCDavis, 2020).

***Asexual***

“The lack of a sexual attraction or desire for other people” (HRC, 2018).

***Biphobia***

“Prejudice, fear or hatred directed toward bisexual people” (HRC, 2018).

***Bisexual***

“A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree” (HRC, 2018).

***Cisgender***

“A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth” (HRC, 2018).

***Closeted***

“Describes an LGBTQ person who has not disclosed their sexual orientation or gender identity” (HRC, 2018).

***Coming Out***

“The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts and appreciates his or her sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others” (HRC, 2018).

***Demisexual***

“A sexual orientation in which someone feels sexual attraction only to people with whom they have an emotional bond” (UCDavis, 2020)

***Gay***

“A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender” (HRC, 2018).

***Gender***

The American Psychological Association (APA; 2012) defined gender as “the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors” that are associated with a biological sex (as cited in Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2014, p. 24).

***Gender-Expansive***

“Conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system” (HRC, 2018).

***Gender Expression***

“External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine” (HRC, 2018).

***Gender-Fluid***

“According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a person who does not identify with a single fixed gender; of or relating to a person having or expressing a fluid or unfixed gender identity” (HRC, 2018).

***Gender Identity***

“One’s innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth” (HRC, 2018). It is important to note that an individual’s sexual practices or sexual identity may or may not reflect the individual’s gender identity (Oliver & Hyde, 1993).

### ***Gender Non-Conforming***

“A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category” (HRC, 2018).

### ***Gender Transition***

“The process by which some people strive to more closely align their internal knowledge of gender with its outward appearance. Some people socially transition, whereby they might begin dressing, using names and pronouns and/or be socially recognized as another gender. Others undergo physical transitions in which they modify their bodies through medical interventions” (HRC, 2018).

### ***Genderqueer***

“Genderqueer people typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as "genderqueer" may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female or as falling completely outside these categories” (HRC, 2018).

### ***Heteronormativity***

The assumption that gender is binary, womxn and men, and that all individuals should conform to the societal expectations surrounding gender identity, gender expression, and sexual and romantic attraction (UCDavis, 2020).

### ***Heterosexism***

“The assumption that all people are or should be heterosexual” (UCDavis, 2020).

***Heterosexuality***

“A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of a gender other than their own” (UCDavis, 2020).

***Homophobia***

“The fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who are attracted to members of the same sex” (HRC, 2018).

***Homosexual/Homosexuality***

“An outdated term to describe a sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of the same gender” (UCDavis, 2020).

***LGBTQIA***

The term LGBTQIA is an acronym that includes individuals based on their sexual identities and gender identities (Garvey et al., 2015). LGBTQIA is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual.

***Living Openly***

“A state in which LGBTQ people are comfortably out about their sexual orientation or gender identity – where and when it feels appropriate to them” (HRC, 2018).

***Monosexism***

“The belief in and systematic privileging of monosexuality as superior, and the systematic oppression of non-monosexuality” (UCDavis, 2020).

***Monosexual***

“People who have romantic, sexual, or affectional desire for one gender only. Heterosexuality and homosexuality are the most well-known forms of monosexuality” (UCDavis, 2020).

***Outing***

“Exposing someone’s lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety or religious or family situations” (HRC, 2018).

***Pansexual***

“Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree” (HRC, 2018).

***Polyamory***

“Consensually being in/open to multiple loving relationships at the same time” (UCDavis, 2020).

***Polysexual***

A sexual orientation where individuals “have romantic, sexual, or affectional desire for more than one gender” (UCDavis, 2020).

***Queer***

“A term people often use to express fluid identities and orientations. Often used interchangeably with ‘LGBTQ’” (HRC, 2018).

### ***Questioning***

“A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity” (HRC, 2018).

### ***Same-Gender Loving***

“A term some prefer to use instead of lesbian, gay or bisexual to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender” (HRC, 2018).

### ***Sexual Identity***

The term sexual identities can include “gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, same gender loving, women loving women, man loving man, and pansexual” (Garvey et al., 2015, p. 531).

### ***Sexual Orientation***

The over encompassing term to describe identities such as heterosexual or LGBTQIA; gay, lesbian, bisexual. It is considered to be the romantic or sexual attraction an individual may experience (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2014). “An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people” (HRC, 2018).

### ***Sexuality***

Considered an over-arching term regarding the “many aspects of the human experience” (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2014, p. 29). According to the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECCUS; 2012), sexuality is specifically considered “the sexual knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors of individuals” with regards to “... the sexual response system; identity orientation, roles,

and personality; and thoughts, feelings, and relationships” (as cited in Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2014, p. 24).

***Transgender***

“An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc” (HRC, 2018).

***Transphobia***

“The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, transgender people” (HRC, 2018).

**APPENDIX B  
CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS**

**Email to Institutional Gatekeepers**

My name is Andrew Herridge. I am a Ph.D. Candidate in Higher Education Research at Texas Tech. I am conducting a study as part of my dissertation, under the supervision of Dr. Hugo Garcia, to describe the experience of queer Latinx men at Hispanic Serving Institutions. We are currently seeking participants for our study.

Inclusion criteria for participants: Queer Latinx men between the ages of 18 and 28 enrolled at Texas Tech University main campus.

We would like to ask for your help to share our recruitment message [written below] with students who may potentially be interested.

Should you wish to have me visit a meeting or class affiliated with your office to share my recruitment information, I will be happy to schedule a convenient time.

--

We are looking for queer Latinx men between the ages of 18 and 28 to participate in a research study on experiences on a college campus. This study will involve a 60 minute confidential interview.

Participants will receive a \$20 Amazon gift card.

To express interest in participating in this study, please complete our interest form:

[https://educttu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6DVCTm6fWKd6suN](https://educttu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6DVCTm6fWKd6suN)

Research participation is completely confidential.

Interviews may be conducted in-person, by phone, or via video conferencing.

Interviews conducted in-person or by phone will be audio recorded. Interviews conducted via video conferencing will be audio and video recorded.

For more information, please contact Andrew Herridge at [Andrew.herridge@ttu.edu](mailto:Andrew.herridge@ttu.edu).

This study has been approved by the Human Research Protection Program at Texas Tech University.

### **Email to Student Organizations**

My name is Andrew Herridge. I am a Ph.D. Candidate in Higher Education Research at Texas Tech. I am conducting a study as part of my dissertation, under the supervision of Dr. Hugo Garcia, to describe the experience of queer Latinx men at Hispanic Serving Institutions. We are currently seeking participants for our study.

Inclusion criteria for participants: Queer Latinx men between the ages of 18 and 28 enrolled at Texas Tech University main campus.

We would like to ask for your help to share our recruitment message [written below] with students who may potentially be interested.

Should you wish to have me visit a meeting to share my recruitment information, I will be happy to schedule a convenient time.

--

We are looking for queer Latinx men between the ages of 18 and 28 to participate in a research study on experiences on a college campus. This study will involve a 60 minute confidential interview.

Participants will receive a \$20 Amazon gift card.

To express interest in participating in this study, please complete our interest form:

[https://educttu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6DVCTm6fWKd6suN](https://educttu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6DVCTm6fWKd6suN)

Research participation is completely confidential.

Interviews may be conducted in-person, by phone, or via video conferencing.

Interviews conducted in-person or by phone will be audio recorded. Interviews conducted via video conferencing will be audio and video recorded.

For more information, please contact Andrew Herridge at [Andrew.herridge@ttu.edu](mailto:Andrew.herridge@ttu.edu).

This study has been approved by the Human Research Protection Program at Texas Tech University.

**Email to Faculty**

My name is Andrew Herridge. I am a Ph.D. Candidate in Higher Education Research at Texas Tech. I am conducting a study as part of my dissertation, under the supervision of Dr. Hugo Garcia, to describe the experience of queer Latinx men at Hispanic Serving Institutions. We are currently seeking participants for our study.

Inclusion criteria for participants: Queer Latinx men between the ages of 18 and 28 enrolled at Texas Tech University main campus.

We would like to ask for your help to share our recruitment message [written below] with students who may potentially be interested.

Should you wish to have me visit your class to share my recruitment information, I will be happy to schedule a convenient time.

--

We are looking for queer Latinx men between the ages of 18 and 28 to participate in a research study on experiences on a college campus. This study will involve a 60 minute confidential interview.

Participants will receive a \$20 Amazon gift card.

To express interest in participating in this study, please complete our interest form:

[https://educttu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6DVCTm6fWKd6suN](https://educttu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6DVCTm6fWKd6suN)

Research participation is completely confidential.

Interviews may be conducted in-person, by phone, or via video conferencing.

Interviews conducted in-person or by phone will be audio recorded. Interviews conducted via video conferencing will be audio and video recorded.

For more information, please contact Andrew Herridge at [Andrew.herridge@ttu.edu](mailto:Andrew.herridge@ttu.edu).

This study has been approved by the Human Research Protection Program at Texas Tech University.

### **Electronic Announcement**

We are looking for queer Latinx men between the ages of 18 and 28 to participate in a research study on experiences on a college campus. This study will involve a 60 minute confidential interview.

Participants will receive a \$20 Amazon gift card.

To express interest in participating in this study, please complete our interest form:

[https://educttu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6DVCTm6fWKd6suN](https://educttu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6DVCTm6fWKd6suN)

Research participation is completely confidential.

Interviews may be conducted in-person, by phone, or via video conferencing.

Interviews conducted in-person or by phone will be audio recorded. Interviews conducted via video conferencing will be audio and video recorded.

For more information, please contact Andrew Herridge at [Andrew.herridge@ttu.edu](mailto:Andrew.herridge@ttu.edu).

This study has been approved by the Human Research Protection Program at Texas Tech University.

### **Oral Script**

My name is Andrew Herridge. I am a Ph.D. Candidate in Higher Education Research at Texas Tech. I am conducting a study, under the supervision of Dr. Hugo Garcia, to describe the experience of queer Latinx men between the ages of 18 and 28. The process consists of a 60 minute interview. The interviews will be confidential. Interviews may be conducted in-person on the TTU main campus, by phone, or through video conferencing. Audio will be recorded during the interviews. If a video conference interview is selected, both audio and video will be recorded. Participants will receive a \$20 Amazon gift card. This study has been approved by the Human Research Protection Program at Texas Tech University. To express interest in participating in this study, please send an email to

andrew.herridge@ttu.edu. You will then complete a screening form on Qualtrics and provide your name and email when prompted if you are willing to be interviewed.

**APPENDIX C  
PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT FORMS**

**Screening Form**

**Queer Latinx Men Screening Form**

[https://educttu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6DVCTm6fWKd6suN](https://educttu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6DVCTm6fWKd6suN)

**Survey Flow**

---

**Start of Block: Informed Consent**

What is this project studying?

This is a demographics survey to screen potential participants. The study will help us obtain an understanding of how students interact with the campus environment, how they perceive the campus climate, and what impact their interaction and perceptions have on their performance and overall outcomes. What we learn may help people with similar past issues, and we hope to publish this study widely to make it as beneficial as possible.

I have some questions about this study. Who can I ask?

The study is being run by Andrew Herridge, a Ph.D. Candidate in the College of Education and is being supervised by Dr. Hugo Garcia from the College of Education at Texas Tech University. If you have questions, you can email Andrew Herridge at [andrew.herridge@ttu.edu](mailto:andrew.herridge@ttu.edu) or Dr. Garcia at [hugo.garcia@ttu.edu](mailto:hugo.garcia@ttu.edu).

TTU also has a Board that protects the rights of people who participate in research. You can ask them questions at 806.742.2064.

You can also mail your questions to the Human Research Protection Program, Office of the Vice President for Research, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409 or email them to [hrpp@ttu.edu](mailto:hrpp@ttu.edu).

**End of Block: Informed Consent**

---

**Start of Block: Screening Questions**

Are you a currently enrolled student?

- Yes (1)  
 No (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Are you a currently enrolled student? = No*

What was your biological sex assigned at birth?

- Female (2)
  - Intersex (3)
  - Male (4)
- 

What is your gender identity? [Gender identity refers to the gender you personally identify as. i.e. Male, Female, Transgender, etc. Your gender identity may differ from your sex assigned at birth.]

- Female (1)
  - Male (2)
  - Transgender FTM (3)
  - Transgender MTF (4)
  - Not Listed Above (5)
- 

*Skip To: End of Survey If What is your gender identity? [Gender identity refers to the gender you personally identify as. i... = Female*

*Skip To: End of Survey If What is your gender identity? [Gender identity refers to the gender you personally identify as. i... = Transgender MTF*

What is your ethnicity/race?

- Alaska Native (9)
  - Asian (2)
  - Black or African American (3)
  - Hispanic or Latinx (4)
  - Native American or American Indian (5)
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (8)
  - White (6)
  - Not Listed Above (7)
- 

*Skip To: End of Survey If What is your ethnicity/race? != Hispanic or Latinx*

What is your sexual orientation? [Sexual orientation refers to the gender you are sexually attracted to.]

- Bisexual [Sexual attraction towards both males and females] (4)
  - Gay [Male with sexual attraction towards males] (2)
  - Heterosexual [Sexual attraction towards opposite gender] (1)
  - Lesbian [Female with sexual attraction towards females] (3)
  - Queer [Sexual attraction not align with heterosexual norms; Fluid sexual attraction] (7)
  - Sexual orientation not listed above [Please list or describe] (6)
- 

*Skip To: End of Survey If What is your sexual orientation? [Sexual orientation refers to the gender you are sexually attrac... = Heterosexual [Sexual attraction towards opposite gender]*

*Skip To: End of Survey If What is your sexual orientation? [Sexual orientation refers to the gender you are sexually attrac... = Lesbian [Female with sexual attraction towards females]*

---

Page Break

---

### **End of Block: Screening Questions**

---

#### **Start of Block: Opt-In**

*Display This Question:*

*If What is your sexual orientation? [Sexual orientation refers to the gender you are sexually attrac... != Heterosexual [Sexual attraction towards opposite gender]*

*And What is your sexual orientation? [Sexual orientation refers to the gender you are sexually attrac... != Lesbian [Female with sexual attraction towards females]*

*And Are you a currently enrolled student? != No*

*And What is your gender identity? [Gender identity refers to the gender you personally identify as. i... != Female]*

*And What is your gender identity? [Gender identity refers to the gender you personally identify as. i... != Transgender MTF]*

*And What is your ethnicity/race? != White*

Are you willing to participate in a 60-minute interview regarding your experiences?  
[Interviews can take place in-person or Skype video/phone conference]

Yes (1)

No (2)

#### **End of Block: Opt-In**

---

## Participant Interest Form

### Queer Latinx Men Participant Interest

[https://educttu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3rSEA1kBXZguTtP](https://educttu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3rSEA1kBXZguTtP)

---

#### Start of Block: Default Question Block

Names and Email addresses will only be used to schedule interviews.

Your name will not be linked to any documentation and any use of this material in reports, publications or presentations will never be associated with participants in this study without permission.

---

Name

---



Email

---

---

University

---

#### End of Block: Default Question Block

---

**APPENDIX D  
INFORMED CONSENT**

**CONSENT FORM**

**Impact of Institutional Diversity Initiatives and Support:**

**Experiences of Queer Latinx Men at Hispanic Serving Institutions**

**What is this research studying?**

This study will help us learn how will help us obtain an understanding of how this population of students interact with the campus environment, how they perceive the campus climate, and what impact their interaction and perceptions have on their performance and overall outcomes. What we learn may help people with similar past issues, and we hope to publish this study widely to make it as beneficial as possible.

**What would I do if I participate?**

In this study, you will be participating in an interview. You will be asked a series of open-ended questions about your personal identities, your experiences, and how you interact with your campus and the surrounding community. The interview will be audio recorded in order for us to obtain accurate information. Interviews conducted via video conferencing will be video and audio recorded. Participants will receive a \$20 Amazon Gift Card. Gift cards will be sent electronically to the provided email within one week of the interview. Participants who withdraw from the study prior to completion will still be eligible to receive the \$20 Amazon Gift Card.

**Will I encounter any discomfort from participating?**

There are minimal foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with this study. While there is no expected risk or harm due to this study, a potential risk exists in terms of the emotional response of participants due to questions they may be asked. Depending on the experiences of the individual participants, a negative emotional response could potentially occur. It is important to note that if you feel you are experiencing a negative emotional response due to questions asked during the interview, you may stop the interview at any time. Texas Tech University also provides confidential counseling services for students. If you feel you may need to utilize counseling services, Texas Tech resources may be obtained at: [www.depts.ttu.edu/scc](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/scc) Additional resources may be available to you through your institution.

**Campus Resources:**

Texas Tech Student Counseling Center: 806.742.3674

Texas Tech Crisis HelpLine: 806.742.5555

**Community Resources:**

StarCare of Lubbock: 806.740.1421

StarCare of Lubbock Crisis Line: 806.740.1414

**Can I quit if I become uncomfortable?**

Yes, absolutely. Dr. Hugo Garcia and Texas Tech University's Institutional Review Board have reviewed this research project and think you can participate comfortably.

However, you can skip parts of the research you are not comfortable with and stop at any time. You may withdraw from the study at any time by informing the researcher you wish to not continue. You will keep all the benefits of participating even if you stop. Participating is your choice.

**How long will participation take?**

We are asking for 60 minutes of your time.

**How are you protecting privacy?**

Your name will not be linked to any material in reports, publications or presentations. No one other than the researchers associated with this project will have access to the raw data. All related documentation will be stored in the researcher's locked office or on a password protected computer. Participants will be asked to select a pseudonym prior to beginning the interview. Pseudonyms will not be associated with any personally identifying information

**What will happen to my data?**

Identifiers might be removed from the identifiable private information and after such removal the information could be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent from you or your legally authorized representative. All audio and video files will be destroyed following the completion of the transcription process.

**What are the benefits and risks of participating in this research?**

There are no anticipated risks or benefits to your participation in this research. Besides providing the project with valuable information, there is no direct benefit. We appreciate your time and effort with this research study.

**I have some questions about this study. Who can I ask?**

The study is being run by Dr. Hugo Garcia and Andrew Herridge from the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership at Texas Tech University. If you have questions, you can call him at 806-834-5656.

Texas Tech University also has an Institutional Review Board that protects the rights of people who participate in research. You can contact them at 806-742-2064 or hrpp@ttu.edu.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant

**APPENDIX E**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE**

***Interviewee Information***

Pseudonym/ Alternative Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Sex \_\_\_\_\_

What is your gender identity? [Gender identity refers to the gender you personally identify as. i.e. Male, Female, Transgender, etc.] \_\_\_\_\_

What is your ethnicity? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your sexual orientation? [Sexual orientation refers to the gender you are sexually attracted to. i.e. Gay (Attraction towards men), Bisexual (Attraction towards both male and females), etc.] \_\_\_\_\_

Do you consider yourself to be “out” in regard to your sexual orientation? [Feeling comfortable expressing or discussing your gender identity or sexual orientation with friends, family, and/or coworkers] \_\_\_\_\_

At what age did you begin identifying with a non-heterosexual identity? \_\_\_\_\_

***School Information***

What is your classification? [Undergraduate, Graduate, etc.] \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you been at this university? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your major or intended major? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your GPA? \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX F**

### **INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

#### Questions

1. How do you define the campus culture at this university?
2. Briefly describe how you have personally navigated/presented the identities you hold while at this university.
3. Considering the identities you hold, briefly describe the level of representation you perceive among the university employees and policies.
4. How do you perceive masculinity?
5. In what ways does masculinity play a role in your life and in the way you present yourself within society?
6. In what way, if any, has the concept of masculinity played a role in the development of your sexuality?
7. Describe your experiences based on having multiple intersecting identities [ethnicity and sexual orientation].
8. In what ways do you interact with your community on-campus?
9. What impact have your personal experiences had on your involvement on-campus?
10. Based on the identities you hold, in what ways have your personal experiences on-campus been impacted?
11. Based on the identities you hold; what impact have your personal experiences had on your academics?
12. Based on the identities you hold, what resources [clubs, organizations, mobile apps, internet, etc.] do you utilize?
13. Considering these resources, describe your decision process for selecting and using them.
14. Describe how you have utilized these resources in order to engage with the campus, either socially or academically.
15. Considering the identities you hold, what resources do you feel would be of benefit to you in improving your experiences, either socially or academically?
16. In what ways have you attempted to overcome any barriers or challenges you have faced while on-campus, based on your personal identities?
17. What does a barrier or challenge free campus environment look like to you?

**APPENDIX G**  
**INTERVIEW QUESTION TABLE**

Interview Questions	RQ	Theory
1. How do you define the campus culture at this university?	1	Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity
2. Briefly describe how you have personally navigated/presented the identities you hold while at this university.	1,2	Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development
3. Considering the identities you hold, briefly describe the level of representation you perceive among the university employees and policies.	1,2	Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity
4. How do you perceive masculinity?	2	Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity
5. In what ways does masculinity play a role in your life and in the way you present yourself within society?	1,2	Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity
6. In what way, if any, has the concept of masculinity played a role in the development of your sexuality?	1,2	Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity
7. Describe your experiences based on having multiple intersecting identities [ethnicity and sexual orientation].	1,2	Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity
8. In what ways do you interact with your community on-campus?	1,2,3	Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity
9. What impact have your personal experiences had on your involvement on-campus?	1,2	Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity
10. Based on the identities you hold, in what ways have your personal experiences on-campus been impacted?	1,2	Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity
11. Based on the identities you hold; what impact have your personal experiences had on your academics?	1,2	Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity

12. Based on the identities you hold, what resources [clubs, organizations, mobile apps, internet, etc.] do you utilize?	3	Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity
13. Considering these resources, describe your decision process for selecting and using them.	3	Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity
14. Describe how you have utilized these resources in order to engage with the campus, either socially or academically.	3	Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity
15. Considering the identities you hold, what resources do you feel would be of benefit to you in improving your experiences, either socially or academically?	3	Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity
16. In what ways have you attempted to overcome any barriers or challenges you have faced while on-campus, based on your personal identities?	1,2,3	Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity
17. What does a barrier or challenge free campus environment look like to you?	1,2,3	Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity

## APPENDIX H INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



Feb 17, 2020 8:07 AM CST

Hugo Garcia-Gonzalez  
Educational Psychology Leaders

Re: IRB2019-1265 Impact of Institutional Diversity Initiatives and Support: Experiences of Queer Latinx Men at Hispanic Serving Institutions

Findings: Best of luck with your research project!

Dear Dr. Hugo Garcia-Gonzalez, Andrew Herridge:

A Texas Tech University IRB reviewer has approved the proposal referenced above within the expedited category of:

6. Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

The approval is effective on February 17, 2020. Annual review is not required, and no expiration date will be listed on your letter.

The research must follow Texas Tech University's Operating Procedures, the Belmont Report, and 45 CFR 46. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a **Modification Submission** must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If a deviation, unanticipated problem or adverse event happens during your research, please notify the Texas Tech University, Human Research Protection Program as soon as possible (45 CFR 46). We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and for you to submit an **Incident Submission** in Cayuse IRB.

Your study may be selected for a Post-Approval Monitoring (PAM). You will be notified if your study has been chosen for a PAM. A PAM investigator may request to observe your data collection procedures, including the consent process.

Once your research is complete and no identifiable data remains, please use a **Closure Submission** to archive this study. IRBs that remain active are subject to audit by the IRB.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNATURE  
AVAILABLE UPON  
REQUEST

Kelly Cukrowicz, Ph.D.  
Chair Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board  
Professor, Department of Psychological Sciences  
Human Research Protection Program  
357 Administration Building  
Lubbock, Texas 79409-1075  
T 806.742.2064  
[www.hrpp.ttu.edu](http://www.hrpp.ttu.edu)

**APPENDIX I**  
**SPRINGER NATURE COPYRIGHT PERMISSION**

This Agreement between Mr. Andrew Herridge ("You") and Springer Nature ("Springer Nature") consists of your license details and the terms and conditions provided by Springer Nature and Copyright Clearance Center.

License Number	4565190041717
License date	Apr 10, 2019
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Type of Use	Thesis/Dissertation
Requestor type	academic/university or research institute
Format	print and electronic
Portion	figures/tables/illustrations
Number of figures/tables/illustrations	2
Will you be translating?	no
Circulation/distribution	<501
Author of this Springer Nature content	no
Title	Impact of Institutional Diversity Initiatives and Support: Experiences of Gay, Bisexual, and Queer Males of Color at Minority Serving Institutions
Institution name	Texas Tech University
Expected presentation date	Feb 2020
Portions	Fig. 27.1 Determinants of sexual identity development (Figure on bottom of page 657) Fig. 27.2 Processes of sexual identity development (Figure on top of page 658)
Requestor Location	Mr. Andrew Herridge TTU College of Education 3002 18th Street Box 1071 LUBBOCK, TX 79409 United States Attn: Mr. Andrew Herridge
Total	0.00 USD

## APPENDIX J JOHNS HOPKINS COPYRIGHT PERMISSION

This Agreement between Andrew S Herridge ("You") and Johns Hopkins University Press - Journals ("Johns Hopkins University Press - Journals") consists of your order details and the terms and conditions provided by Johns Hopkins University Press - Journals and Copyright Clearance Center.

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Licensed content publisher	Johns Hopkins University Press - Journals
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Licensed content date	Jan 1, 2005
Type of use	Thesis/Dissertation
Requestor type	Academic institution
Format	Print, Electronic
Portion	chart/graph/table/figure
Number of charts/graphs/tables/figures	1
The requesting person/organization	Andrew Herridge
Title or numeric reference of the portion(s)	FIGURE 1. Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity
Title of the article or chapter the portion is from	A Conceptual Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity
Editor of portion(s)	N/A
Author of portion(s)	Susan R. Jones, Marylu K. McEwen
Volume of serial or monograph	41
Issue, if republishing an article from a serial	4
Page range of portion	409
Publication date of portion	July/August 2000
Rights for	Main product
Duration of use	Life of current edition
Creation of copies for the disabled	no
With minor editing privileges	no
For distribution to	Worldwide
In the following language(s)	Original language of publication
With incidental promotional use	no
Lifetime unit quantity of new product	Up to 499
Title	Impact of Institutional Diversity Initiatives and Support: Experiences of Gay, Bisexual, and Queer Males of Color at Minority Serving Institutions
Institution name	Texas Tech University
Expected presentation date	Feb 2020
Requestor Location	Mr. Andrew Herridge TTU College of Education 3002 18th Street Box 1071 LUBBOCK, TX 79409 United States Attn: Mr. Andrew Herridge
Billing Type	Invoice
Billing address	Mr. Andrew Herridge TTU College of Education 3002 18th Street Box 1071 LUBBOCK, TX 79409 United States Attn: Mr. Andrew Herridge
Total (may include CCC user fee)	0.00 USD