

BEYOND THE BINARY: HOW COLLEGE MEN CONSTRUCT POSITIVE MASCULINITY

by

PHILIP DANIEL BADASZEWSKI

(Under the Direction of Merrily S. Dunn)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to explore the factors influencing college men's positive masculinity development. This study conducted from a constructionist epistemological paradigm, through a queer theoretical lens, and using grounded theory methodology, resulted in the co-construction of a model of men's positive masculinity development. Two semi-structured interviews conducted with eight undergraduate men provided an opportunity for participants to discuss their lives as men, their understanding of masculinity, the intersections of other aspects of their identity and their masculinity, and the role of peers, friends, family, and role models had on their development.

The theory that emerged from this study is grounded in the participants' experiences and depicts how sense of self, people, and life events influence positive masculinity development. Positive masculinity was influenced by a number of factors, but always through a lens of traditionally masculine norms. These norms were described as societal expectations traditionally ascribed to men. Lived experiences and interactions with family, role models, and friends who are women contributed to participant's positive masculine ideals. Additionally, developing a strong sense of self and recognizing negative traits of their male peers also played a role in positive masculinity development.

Positive masculinity was constructed not in opposition to hegemonic masculinity, but outside of traditional, binary constructions of masculinity. Furthermore, positive masculine conceptualizations influenced how the men considered their identity and their relationships with family, male peers, and women. This theory of factors of college men's positive masculinity development has implications relevant for future theory development, understanding of gender construction, and student affairs practice.

INDEX WORDS: Men, College Men, Masculinity, Undergraduate, Positive Masculinity, Intersectionality, Grounded Theory, Queer Theory, Hegemonic Masculinity

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to everyone who helped me along this journey, but particularly my parents, friends, and cohort members. To my participants, this dissertation would not have been possible without your willingness to honestly share your stories. Merrily Dunn with sarcasm, dedication, and friends.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Most students who become involved in campus discipline difficulties are men, and most often they are younger, usually in their freshmen and sophomore year” (Dannells, 1997, p. 25). While working as a hall director between 2007 and 2011, I was taken aback by the behavior of many of my male students. They regularly engaged in high-risk behavior and then visited my office for conduct meetings more frequently than their female counterparts. Many of these men would become repeat policy violators and return to my office on multiple occasions, leading some to be judicially moved to another residence hall, have their residence hall contract canceled, or even be suspended from the university for a period of time. Several campus assessments (American College Health Association, 2009, Spring; The Ohio State University - Student Life Research and Assessment, 2008, August) showed men were more likely to binge drink and engage in other high-risk behaviors, but, at the time, I did not fully understand the prevalence of this problem or how to address it.

In these conduct meetings I would attempt to ask the men why they behaved the way they did and how they thought it impacted the other students on their floor or in the building. Often, they had not considered the impact their behavior had on others and felt what they were doing was what they were supposed to do in college. In 2008, Michael Kimmel published the book *Guyland* and, after reading it, I better understood the full scope of the problem. I began looking at other literature related to college men and attending the limited number of conference presentations that focused on this area. At the same time, several serious incidents, one

involving a football player and another involving a fraternity member, occurred at my institution. These incidents led to a larger conversation about how we worked to support men and what we could do to help men understand how aspects of their behavior tied back to what they thought it meant to be a man. As a member of a collaborative group organized to consider ways to address this behavior, I was able to work with other men from across campus who were interested in helping college men learn from their past behavior and become better citizens.

Although the majority of the men we worked with as part of the collaborative were sent to us through a judicial sanction, I realized not all men behave badly. Many of my best resident advisors, hall council members, and other student leaders were men. These students were actively engaged in the residence hall and institutional communities. They were seen as leaders both inside and outside the classroom. What led these men to involvement and positive contributions to the institution rather than negative behavior and conduct meetings? That question became the impetus for an initial study to explore how a small group of college men formed positive masculine identities and worked to make a positive difference in their community (Badaszewski, Dunn, & Johnson, 2013). The findings led to additional questions. Since the sample was small and non-diverse, what does positive masculinity look like in a broader sample? Is there a way to conceptualize a developmental process for college men's masculinity with a focus on positivity in an effort to understand the men who do not engage in problem behaviors and to help those that do? These questions provided the impetus for this current study which was approached from a constructionist epistemological perspective through a queer theoretical lens. This approach allowed for the consideration of gender as socially constructed while challenging the way gender has been defined and breaking down frequently used binary categories.

Subjectivity Statement

In qualitative research it is important, as a researcher, to acknowledge the identities you bring with you to the research process. Subjectivity is a “garment that cannot be removed” (Peshkin, 1988, p. 17). Those garments impact not only your observational capabilities throughout the research process, but also the way participants might view you as a researcher and thereby their willingness to be open in an interview setting.

As discussed in the introduction, my previous work experience brought me in contact with college men through the conduct process. In addition, my education and current doctoral program focus on the development and growth of college students. As a result, I bring significant knowledge to this process. Although this knowledge is beneficial for understanding college student needs, it could skew my interpretation of the information shared by participants.

As a White man I did not have to truly consider my gender or race as a piece of my developmental process. Additionally, I recognize the privilege inherent with both my race and gender. While as a man I am not typically the statistical majority on most college campuses, I still benefit from that privilege. Furthermore, even when White men do not make up the student majority they can frequently make up the faculty and staff majority, furthering my privilege.

However, as a man I understand the pressures inherent with this aspect of identity. The constant competition, fear of femininity, and pressure to excel are all things I witnessed growing up. Although I was fortunate to have two parents who supported my individuality and everything I wanted to do, I recognize not every man had the same opportunities. I was raised in a two-parent household in an upper-middle class neighborhood. My parents were able to support me emotionally, but also financially. I was able to attend private school from kindergarten to

senior year of high school and participate in many different activities. In a way, my parents were doing what they could to support my ability to grow and develop in positive ways.

Even with the support and encouragement of my parents, I know I have been socialized, through peer and societal interactions, to believe there are certain things that I should do as a man. I did not engage in behaviors typically ascribed to men, particularly college men (e.g., binge drinking, drug use, lack of academic engagement), but I often fought an internal battle between what I learned was right from my parents versus what society suggested I should be doing as a man.

My mother always told me she did not care what my friends were doing or what their parents said they could do. I was raised to be better, to be involved in the things that made me happy, and to excel at everything I did. In their own way my parents may have been encouraging my own positive masculinity development. These personal experiences along with my professional experiences are subjectivities I bring to the research process. They led me to investigate how men become positive contributors to the college environment (Badaszewski et al., 2013) and to further that work through this current study.

Theories come from our past and present experiences and are influenced by people and perspectives throughout life (Charmaz, 2006; Jones & Abes, 2011). I see my personal background as being positive. I have two supportive parents who provided me with opportunities to succeed and always encouraged me to get involved in activities that interested me regardless of whether those activities would be considered masculine. This study created a conceptual model to describe factors influencing positive masculinity. As I spoke with participants, reflected on the research, and continued to explore the literature I was struck by how the experiences of my participants were similar to my own. Dancy (2010, 2011, 2013)

described the concept of transgressive men as African American men who do not adhere to traditional understandings of Black masculinity. This idea struck me as something that could be applicable to all men. As I considered my development as a man and how I consider my own masculinity, I realized that I could name gender norms that influenced my upbringing and my initial conceptualization of masculinity. However, I could also easily identify conscious choices I made, and continue to make, that transgress those normative ideals.

Finally, as I interviewed the participants I was grateful for their openness and honesty throughout their interviews. I know every researcher approaches a study with some hopes for answers to interviews questions and overall findings. I did hope the findings would allow me to create a model, but I was surprised by my open-mindedness related to answers to interview questions. As I began my first interview I realized that I had no idea how participants might answer some of my interview questions. I believe this openness allowed participants to make meaning of their own experience and allowed me to experience that with them. By providing the men space to describe their own journey, I helped to reduce some of the power dynamic between researcher and participant and between dominant and non-dominant identities. My hope is that this dissertation reflects the voices of my participants and that the theoretical model is a true co-construction of their lived experiences, stories, and individual backgrounds.

Operational Definitions

It is important to define key terms early to provide the reader a clear understanding of important research concepts. The following definitions will guide the research and are described further in chapter two.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Masculinity is culturally dependent (Kahn, Brett, & Holmes, 2011; Lazur & Majors, 1995). In United States culture, masculinity is viewed as dominant even though literature related to college men regularly paints a negative picture of masculinity (Connell, 2001). Although research on positive masculinity is increasing (Badaszewski et al., 2013; Harris & Harper, 2012; Kiselica & Englar-Carlson, 2010), masculinity is often still viewed negatively. For this study, masculinity will be viewed through a hegemonic lens. Hegemonic masculinity guarantees the dominant social position of men and patriarchy and subordinates not only women, but also all things considered feminine (R. W. Connell, 2001, 2005).

Positivity

Positive psychology examines how events and experiences promote personal growth and optimal functions (Gable & Haidt, 2005). To fully understand human development and personal growth researchers must consider positive life events and the benefits people receive. For this study, positivity describes situations that support emotional growth and character development, encourage strengths, and promote happiness (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005; Stevic & Ward, 2008).

Positive Masculinity

Researchers have found that positive masculinity is an active process where men make conscious choices counter to societal norms for men (Harris & Harper, 2012). Hegemonic masculinity may reflect societal norms, but that does not mean hegemonic masculinity does not include positive aspects. According to R. W. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), hegemonic masculinity would not be dominant or used as the standard of masculinity if it did not embody some good qualities. This study will not ignore the possibility of positive hegemonic

masculinity, but will view positive masculinity as “men breaking through gender norms to embrace an individual sense of self, a comfort in their own skin and a desire to help other people” (Badaszewski et al., 2013, p. 23).

Statement of the Problem

“For more than two centuries, masculine norms and gender ideologies that privileged men were woven into the structural character of colleges and universities” (S. R. Harper & Harris, 2010, p. 3). Despite the historically male tradition of higher education, recent trends have shown a sharp decline in academic achievement by men. Current data place men in the minority in colleges and universities. According to National Center for Educational Statistics, in 2011 undergraduate men made up only 43% (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012b) of the total enrollment in colleges and universities and earned only 42.8% of the 1.7 million bachelor’s degrees awarded in 2010-2011 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012a). Furthermore, men who complete high school are also less likely to enroll in college than women. Although the percentage of men enrolling in college has increased from 59.9% in 2000 to 64.7% in 2011, the enrollment disparity of women compared to men has increased over the same period (7.5% in 2011 versus 6.3% in 2000) (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012c).

Reviewing literature on college men, Kellom (2004) found men are not only less academically prepared, but as a group they are also less likely to study, take advantage of cocurricular opportunities, utilize campus services, and vote. Men are also more likely to engage in potentially physically harmful behaviors. Men are more likely to drink harmful amounts of alcohol (Capraro, 2000) and engage in risky physical and sexual behavior (Courtenay, 2004). Men are also more likely to be the victim of direct verbal threats and physical assault (American College Health Association, 2012, Fall). According to the same ACHA survey, in the 12 months

after consuming alcohol men were more likely to have done something they later regretted, forgotten where they were, gotten in trouble with the police, had unprotected sex, physically injured themselves, physically injured another person, or seriously considered suicide.

Although data on college men show an increasingly grim picture, little has been written about how they develop during college or what factors impact development. Some scholars would argue men have already been the subject of numerous studies. Many of the foundational theories in student affairs are based on studies which included only men (Cass, 1979; Chickering, 1969; Cross, 1978; Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010; Kohlberg, 1971; Perry, 1970). This leads to the incorrect assumption that men are well understood in the literature. While these studies included only men, their samples were exclusively White men, who identified as heterosexual, and whose data now represent past generations. Furthermore, their focus was on other aspects of human and student development and did not include gender as an identity construct, nor did they explore it or consider it for theory creation (Davis & Laker, 2004; S. R. Harper & Harris, 2010).

Over the past two decades, research into the behavior and masculinity development of college men has increased. Researchers have explored men's gender role conflict (Davis, 2002), men's understanding of self (Edwards & Jones, 2009), and how men make meaning of their masculinity (Harris, 2008, 2010). Additionally, researchers have constructed models to explore overrepresentation of college men among judicial offenders (S. R. Harper, Harris, & Mmeje, 2005) and the meaning men ascribe to their masculinity (Harris, 2010). However, much of the recent research has taken a deficit approach to the exploration of men's development. According to the research, men are involved in more campus judicial cases (S. R. Harper et al., 2005) and are more likely to respond to situations with anger (Kinney, Smith, & Donzella, 2001). They also

have lower self-esteem due to socialization processes (hooks, 2004), struggle with body image even when their weight is in the normal range (Hatoum & Belle, 2010), and avoid intervening in violent situations due to masculine norms (Carlson, 2008).

These facts raise an interesting point. Men expect college, and the years immediately following, to include opportunities for exploration and risk taking without consequences (Kimmel, 2008). Arnett (2012) described this period as emerging adulthood, a period when young people explore their identity, focus on themselves, and believe all possibilities exist. For men (and women), emerging adulthood covers the traditional college years and those following graduation. As much of the research has shown, for men this period often involves multiple jobs, serial dating and/or hooking up, and re-creating their college experience by living with five or six other men in a two bedroom apartment (Kimmel, 2008). This often results in increased mental health problems and an avoidance of being “tied down” to careers, locations, or partners (Arnett, 2007; Tanner & Arnett, 2011). Arnett (2007, 2012) termed it emerging adulthood; Kimmel (2008) refers to the same period as Guyland, an undefined span of time where guys gather to be guys with each other while avoiding the responsibilities of adulthood and enjoying freedom without consequences; however, these men often ultimately succeed and become leaders once they decide to settle down (Arnett, 2007; Kimmel, 2008).

Studies on college men have increased, but little information is known about how to best work with and support college men particularly because “college educators have traditionally not viewed their male students as gendered beings nor have they considered the establishment of healthy gender identity a priority for college men” (Harris & Struve, 2009, p. 4). More importantly, the majority of the studies exploring masculinity have further articulated college

men's deficits rather than exploring productive and positive variations of masculinity, indicating the need for further examination.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to conceptualize how college men develop a positive masculine identity. The outcome of this study is a theoretical model explaining the factors that influence the development of positive masculinity. This study was approached from a constructionist epistemological perspective through a queer theoretical lens. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do men negotiate their gendered identity as men in college?
2. How do positive and hegemonic masculinity change at the intersections of other identity dimensions?
3. How do college men negotiate, simultaneously resisting and reinforcing, positive and hegemonic masculinity?

Significance of the Study

The grounded theory that emerged from this study makes practical and theoretical contributions to practitioners and scholars alike. This study sought to add to the literature on college men by not only providing additional understanding of how college men develop, but also how men develop a positive masculine identity. As discussed, college men face a litany of challenges in higher education and often respond with less than positive behavior (Capraro, 2000; Dannells, 1997; S. R. Harper et al., 2005; Rhoads, 2010). The majority of research on men's development focuses on that negative behavior and responding to it after it occurs.

The current concern is research has not provided student affairs practitioners the information they “need to better understand how some men develop into mature adults who

responsibly enter society as healthy citizens, ethical leaders and professionals, principled parents, and unwavering agents for social justice” (Harper & Harris, 2010, p. 12). A new theoretical understanding of college men’s masculinity development, grounded in the experience of the participants, provides practitioners and scholars with a new understanding of how to effectively challenge and support college men. Furthermore, practitioners will be able to develop more effective interventions to address problem behaviors and encourage positive growth in men. Finally, approaching college men’s development from a positive perspective helps to shift the traditional deficit-based approach to studying and working with college men.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

“‘College’ today may be like ‘the home’ in history – one of those places where there is tension between the imperatives of manhood and the demands of education” (Capraro, 2004, p. 29). This study explored the space where manhood and education overlap. Although much of the literature on college men described the ways men behave badly, this study seeks to do the opposite. The purpose of this study was to explore how college men form a positive masculine identity. By considering how men construct masculine identity, how men consider non-hegemonic forms of masculinity, and how men develop positive masculine behavioral patterns, this study sought to create a conceptual model to explain college men’s developmental process through their own words.

When conducting a qualitative study using grounded theory methodology, it is necessary to understand previous research to frame questions and ground the new study, but not so much as to cloud interpretation of the data (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Therefore, this literature review outlines how this study was framed, while keeping in mind the principles of grounded theory. This review begins with an overview of definitions of masculinity by discussing how masculinity has been viewed from a deficit perspective, how hegemonic masculinity impacts men, and how more recent research has considered ways men create positive meanings of masculinity. Next, I discuss the impact of gender roles, both strain and conflict, on men. Then I describe how men are socialized to traditional notions of masculinity. The interconnectedness of gender role norms and the socialization process are important

considerations in the development of traditional conceptualizations of masculinity. The development of masculinity is only one piece of a man's full identity. The concept of intersectionality is discussed as a means to understand how masculinity can connect with other components of identity. Then I outline how all of these processes appear in the development and behavior of boys and men. I conclude by discussing queer theory and how it connects with this study.

Traditional Definition of Masculinity

Masculinity as Deficit

The concept of masculinity is challenging to define and is often criticized as a heteronormative concept, which overemphasizes the differences between men and women (R. W. Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). In general, masculinity is viewed as socially constructed and varies by class, race, and ethnicity (Levant, 1996). Masculinity development is influenced and impacted by multiple aspects, including family, media, and overall societal norms. Kahn et al. (2011) stated experiences with masculinity are diverse and ultimately involve men determining what it means to be masculine. Lazur and Majors (1995) described masculinity as varying not only from culture to culture, but also within particular cultures. Every man has different life experiences and environmental impacts which cause redefinition and modification of their conceptions of masculinity (Lazur & Majors, 1995).

Connell (2005) took a different approach by describing what masculinity is not. "An unmasculine person would behave differently: being peaceable rather than violent, conciliatory rather than dominant, hardly able to kick a football, uninterested in sexual conquest, and so forth" (Connell, 2005, p. 29). In fact, a positive definition of masculinity appears absent in the literature. Masculinity is portrayed as a deficit or disassociation with certain areas of the self

particularly around aspects of achievement and emotions. Men want to compete to succeed, stifle their emotions because emotions are viewed as feminine, avoid the appearance of homosexual behaviors, and ultimately seek the approval of peers to validate their identity (R. W. Connell, 1993; Pleck, 1995). Hegemonic masculinity is often used to define masculinity in men's research (S. R. Harper, 2006; Harris, Palmer, & Struve, 2011), even though it is not a strictly deficit concept.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity is the “configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (R. W. Connell, 2001, p. 38). Hegemonic masculinity considers the dominant position of men in societal structures. Masculinity sustains that dominance. Both men and women act in ways to further male privilege and to push men to conform to a stereotypical view of masculinity whether it is beneficial or not (Kahn, 2009). It is assumed men should benchmark against this view of masculinity even though it is a fantasized conception of masculinity, and one that does not embody the majority of men.

Connell (2001) outlined four hierarchical relations of hegemonic masculinity: dominant, complicit, marginalized, and subordinate. Dominant masculinity is the pinnacle of hegemonic masculinity. It directly relates to the overarching definition of hegemonic masculinity and assumes the ascendancy of men over women and the ascendancy of how men choose to operate within society (Howson, 2006). Complicit masculinity could be viewed as the slightly less cool friend of dominant masculinity. In this way, complicit masculinity gains most of the benefits of dominant masculinity through association. Complicit masculinity is not dominant, but supports

the actions and behaviors of dominant masculinity and acquires advantages without the risks (R. W. Connell, 2001; Kahn, 2009).

Marginalized masculinity refers to the relationship between dominant and non-dominant groups. Marginalized groups are those just on the outside of the dominant group due to their race, class, or ethnicity (R. W. Connell, 2001; Howson, 2006). Although individuals within these groups may attain benefits from their male gender identity, they cannot achieve dominant status due to their identity in a non-dominant group (e.g., non-white, non-high socioeconomic status). Subordinate masculinities are similar to marginalized masculinities, but their experiences are also subjugated and considered as lesser forms of masculinity (Kahn, 2009). Often non-heterosexual men are considered a subordinate masculinity due to the connection of gayness to femininity and weakness (R. W. Connell, 2005; Howson, 2006).

Although hegemonic masculinity is traditionally related to the subordination of women, one additional aspect should be considered particularly related to marginalized and subordinated masculinities. “Hegemonic masculinity is the virtually unattainable privilege model of living life as a man” (Harris & Barone, 2011, p. 50). Since the definition of hegemonic masculinity is white, heterosexual, able-bodied, competitive, and wealthy (Kahn, 2009), some men will never be able to attain the highest levels of masculinity. Hearn (2004) called this the hegemony of men, where men are impacted by the dominant social constructions they, themselves, have created throughout history. Many men are in positions of wealth and power, but those in marginalized and subordinated categories face issues of poverty, unemployment, and discrimination even though they may be seen as privileged based on their gender (R. Connell, 2011).

Although her research is related to the intersectional identities of black women, Crenshaw's (1991) concept of identity politics relates to hegemonic masculinity as well. Identity politics considers how people negotiate their various identities within the social world. How does one rank one's identities of being Black, gay, and male or white, bisexual, and a veteran with a disability? While intersectionality will be explored later, identity politics states that ignoring within group issues ultimately impacts challenges among and between groups (Crenshaw, 1991). For men to move beyond hegemonic masculinity and improve societal conditions for men and women, men need to consider intrapersonal ways to break down traditional hegemonic masculinity, particularly for those typically marginalized and subordinated.

Positive Masculinity

Much of the literature explored how colleges and universities reinforce negative and deficit-oriented views of masculinity (Davis, 2002; Davis, Thomas, & Sewalish, 2006; Edwards & Jones, 2009; S. R. Harper et al., 2005; Harris, 2008, 2010; Kahn et al., 2011; Laker & Davis, 2011). Researchers did not consider men who develop in more positive and productive ways. The field of positive psychology is one area that began to move beyond the negative and focus the positive aspects of life (Seligman, 2002).

Positive psychology considers events and experiences that promote personal growth and optimal functioning. Therefore, it is important to consider the beneficial aspects of development in addition to the detrimental in order to fully understand human development (Gable & Haidt, 2005). Researchers in this area consider situations where strengths build "positive experiences and increase the frequency of positive emotions in an individual's life" (Stevic & Ward, 2008, p. 524).

The psychological concept of possible selves is a dimension related to positive psychology. Possible selves are those selves people want to, and can, become in the future (Markus & Nurius, 1986). For men, possible selves are “what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming” (Davies, Shen-Miller, & Isacco, 2010, p. 954). Davies et al. (2010) shaped the idea of possible selves into the concept of possible masculinity. “Possible masculinity encompasses what men need to become healthy, responsible, tolerant, civil, and nurturing in their families and communities...[and] includes those attitudes, characteristics, behaviors, skills, and coping strategies that are required for men to lead positive, healthy lives” (p. 348). Positive psychology and possible masculinity both look to focus in on what men can become with the help of a supportive community. Both concepts encourage researchers to think about men differently and to look beyond many of the negative behaviors for ways in which men can be challenged to become their ideal selves.

Some researchers, both in psychology and higher education, have studied men in an attempt to understand how they develop more positively. Kiselica and Englar-Carlson (2010) and Kiselica, Englar-Carlson, Horne, and Fisher (2008) developed a clinical positive masculinity model structured around positive psychology. This model outlined ten adaptive and healthy characteristics counselors should foster in their male clients (relational styles, ways of caring, generative fatherhood, self-reliance, the worker/provider tradition, courage/risk taking, group orientation, humanitarian service of fraternal organizations, humor, and heroism).

Harris and Harper (2012) conducted interviews with fraternity men to investigate ways in which they behaved counter to stereotypes. Harris and Harper defined the brothers’ behavior as productive masculinity. The men they studied were leaders in their fraternity who consciously disrupted racist, sexist, and homophobic behavior; confronted brothers who behaved in ways

inconsistent with fraternity values; and had significant, non-romantic relationships with women. These men stood in direct opposition to traditional gender roles and socialization processes and, in effect, were modeling an anti-hegemonic definition of masculinity.

Finally, Badaszewski et al. (2013) examined how college men become positive contributors. Participants explained how role models, some of whom were women and gay men, provided significant support for their developmental process. This process was enhanced by a sense of responsibility, a desire to give back to their community, and the opportunity to develop their true sense of self. Based on the results, the authors posited a definition of positive masculinity as “men breaking through gender norms to embrace an individual sense of self, a comfort in their own skin and a desire to help other people” (p. 23). Although this definition is based on findings from a small, homogeneous sample, it does provide a definition to be evaluated in future research. Additionally, participants described numerous experiences where they consciously behaved counter to traditional gender roles.

Gender Roles

Gender roles can be viewed as socially and psychologically constructed concepts that provide certain advantages and/or disadvantages to a particular gender (Levant, 2011). The concept of gender role strain/conflict provides an alternative perspective to gender as an identity development process. In the identity model gender is thought of as having a single, static idea that does not vary based on culture (Pleck, 1995). However, the gender role strain paradigm suggests gender is inconsistent, with a high number of people violating gender norms and the violation of these norms leading to negative psychological consequences (Levant, 2011). This means even the socially and psychologically constructed and transmitted notions of gender are

often unattainable and harmful. The interrelated notions of gender role strain and conflict are explored below.

Gender Role Strain

Gender role strain views gender as psychologically and socially, rather than biologically, constructed. Although biological differences exist, social constructions through biological, psychological, and social experience are what determine differences between masculinity and femininity (Levant, 2011). These constructions further describe the roles that are appropriate for men and women to occupy. For this reason gender role strain considers masculinity as culturally influenced, with no central principles. Social class, race, sexual orientation, history, and geography, among others, will all play a role in the concept of masculinity and its influence on individual men in a particular culture. Pleck (1995) articulated three dynamics of gender role strain: discrepancy, trauma, and dysfunction. These dynamics are “broader ideas about how cultural standards for masculinity, as implemented in gender socialization, have potentially negative effects on individual males” (Pleck, 1995, p. 12).

Discrepancy is related to the idea that the majority of men do not live up to gender role expectations and that the inability to conform negatively influences self-esteem and psychological well-being. Studies on the discrepancy dynamic have explored gender role standards and individual characteristics that influence gender role discrepancy and, assuming gender role discrepancy exists, whether or not men actually experience it as stressful (Pleck, 1995). In another study, Funk and Werhun (2011) asked college men to complete various cognitive tasks after the men did or did not experience gender role harassment from one of the researchers. They found those men who experience gender-role harassment felt their manhood was threatened, did not perform as well on the cognitive measures, and were more likely to

become angry during the testing period. This study furthers Pleck's (1995) thoughts on the discrepancy dynamic because even in a short-term study, college men who were told they did not meet gender role expectations experienced negative self-esteem and well-being.

“Even if male role expectations are successfully fulfilled, the socialization process leading to this fulfillment is traumatic, or the fulfillment itself is traumatic with long-term negative side effects” (Pleck, 1995, p. 12). Men who reach the pinnacle of masculinity experience both individual and social costs. These social costs relate to the impact on those around them (e.g., family, friends, co-workers). In a study on fathering behavior, Silverstein, Auerbach, and Levant (2002) found men sought to provide for their families. By focusing on work as a means to provide for their families, men were emotionally distant from their children and served solely as disciplinarians. Even in instances where both parents worked and men did not need to be the sole provider, straight men left the majority of child care to women (Deutsch, 2004; hooks, 2004; Silverstein et al., 2002). Fathers can successfully provide for their families, but they still exhibit the trauma of gender roles by emotionally shutting out their children and continuing to rely on their wives to assume responsibility for childcare.

Trauma may also relate to men experiencing alexithymia, or trouble experiencing, talking about, or expressing emotions (Berger, Levant, McMillan, Kelleher, & Sellers, 2005). Struggles with emotional expression cause men to be less likely to seek the assistance of a therapist and to hold negative attitudes towards the thought of therapy (Berger et al., 2005). In addition, men may turn away from talking about their feelings and use aggression as the sole means of communication (Berke, Sloan, Parrott, & Zeichner, 2012). This aggression can then lead to violence against women or family members and other socially irresponsible behaviors such as alcoholism and drug abuse (Brooks & Silverstein, 1995)

Finally, the dysfunction dynamic stated that men successfully fulfilling expectations often experience side effects because traditionally male roles have negative side effects on men and those around men. Using the Male Role Norms Inventory (MRNI), Levant and Richmond (2007) found men who endorsed more stereotypical gender roles had a fear of intimacy with partners, lower relationship satisfaction, less participation in childcare, and attitudes conducive to sexual harassment and aggression. Additional research related to the dysfunction dynamic explored the concept of gender role conflict.

Gender Role Conflict

Masculine gender-role identity forms through a man's thoughts on his own roles and values as well as the expectations others have of him (O'Neil & Nadeau, 1999). The concern is that identity development often leads to conflict for men. Gender role conflict causes restrictive gender roles to form, prohibiting a person from living up to his full potential (O'Neil, 1981). Being unaware and insecure about their gender identity leads some people to put down and devalue the behavior of others (O'Neil, 1981), thereby supporting the notion that the bully lacks self-esteem. In order to substantiate the concept of gender role conflict, O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, and Wrightsman (1986) sought empirical support via the Gender Role Conflict Scale.

Gender role conflict scale. James O'Neil (1981) originally developed the Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS) to quantify the developmental experience of men related to their gender through a structured instrument. O'Neil defined gender role conflict as "a psychological state where gender roles have negative consequences of impact on a person or others" (O'Neil et al., 1986, p. 336). O'Neil (1981) believed the overall gender socialization for men was called the masculine mystique and the overarching concept of this socialization was the fear of femininity.

Masculine mystique. The masculine mystique framed how men think about gender roles and their values of masculinity and femininity. The values of the masculine mystique form what is viewed as optimal masculinity even though they are based on rigid gender stereotypes (O'Neil, 1990). The masculine mystique is part of the gender role process, but is ultimately influenced by the gender socialization process. Men's (and women's) lived experiences, whether life events or influential people, clearly play a part in gender role development and the formation of thoughts and values. This is the intersection of gender role socialization and development. Development of men's gender roles is influenced by socialization and vice versa.

Fear of femininity. The overarching idea affecting the masculine mystique is men's fear of femininity, which can be seen throughout the other aspects of the Gender Role Conflict Scale. The fear of femininity associates negative emotions with behaviors, values, and attitudes viewed as stereotypically feminine (O'Neil, 1981). Therefore, the feminine is viewed as inherently weak and negative. Men may give off an aura of confidence, but in reality are working to live up to masculine expectations and avoid being seen as feminine at all costs. "When a man fears his feminine side, he really fears that others see him as stereotypically and negatively feminine (weak, dependent, submissive) rather than positively masculine" (O'Neil, 1990, p. 29). Since femininity is seen as weaker than masculinity, the fear of being labeled as such is what drives the other areas of the gender role development process.

Men's fear of femininity led to four patterns of Gender Role Conflict (GRC). First, Restrictive Emotionality involves fears about expressing feelings as well as difficulty expressing basic emotions (O'Neil, 2008). This restriction of emotional expression is a product of a perceived weakness of women and can cause challenges in men's relationships with other men and women. Second, Success/Power/Competition includes a focus on work and achievement

often at the expense of others (O'Neil, 1981). Men justify their masculinity through work accomplishments and often feel demoralized and emasculated if they are unemployed. Third, Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men entails difficulty expressing feelings and thoughts with men (O'Neil, 2008). Men recognize the rules in communicating with other men and often communicate only in a side-by-side format (e.g., when riding in a car) while using humor to cover their true emotions (Davis, 2002). Fourth, Conflict Between Work and Family Relations causes men to struggle balancing the demands of work and family commitments often leading to health problems, stress, and an inability to relax (O'Neil, 2008). Men are taught to maintain a tough exterior and cover up the pain to remain tough. Additionally, men see their role as fathers as being “emotionally tough family leaders whose priorities are executive leadership, task accomplishment, and strict discipline of children” (Brooks & Gilbert, 1995, pp. 267-268). This adherence to traditional male gender roles in family settings leads to increased stress as well as overall conflict within the family.

Socialization

Social Psychological Development of Masculinity

Social psychology explores the connection between people and the social environment (Hollander, Renfrow, & Howard, 2011). Men's relationship with the social environment, and their interactions with others, help form their gender identity. When men come to college they have, to varying degrees, been influenced by peers, parents, media, and sports. These influences all impact the social construction of their identity (S. R. Harper et al., 2005). Addis and Cohane (2005) observed masculinities not only change throughout life based on family and peers influences, but also are supported by gender norms and stereotypes.

Men operate in this social environment on both a conscious and unconscious level. Men's gender identity is shaped through the environment, those with whom they interact, and how they think about and internalize the environment and the interaction. This is the concept of social cognition, or how we consider our world (Hollander et al., 2011). Through social cognition individuals form social representations, which help them make sense of the world, create new knowledge via interaction, and communicate that to others (Howard & Renfrow, 2006).

Social cognition provides the basis for how men and women think about and learn how to behave according to gender roles. "Gendered behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes are learned from social environments through basic processes of reinforcement, punishment, modeling, and the acquisition of gendered schemas or belief systems" (Addis & Cohane, 2005, p. 637). While social cognition and social representations play a role in men's development, it is also men's interpretation, or misinterpretation of other men's behavior, which plays a significant part in the process. Men form misperceptions by remembering problem behavior displayed by a small group of individuals rather than more commonly displayed positive behavior (Berkowitz, 2005). In essence, the majority believes it is the minority when it is not (Berkowitz, 2005). This concept is commonly referred to as pluralistic ignorance. Pluralistic ignorance "operates by encouraging individuals to suppress healthy attitudes and behaviors that are believed to be contradictory to the norm and to encourage unhealthy attitudes and behaviors that are falsely perceived as normative" (S. R. Harper et al., 2005, p. 577).

One example of this can be seen in the behavior of White men. Often seen as the majority and the model of masculinity, these men squandered the opportunity to change the definition of masculinity by simply reinforcing traditional masculine ideals.

American white men bought the promise of self-made masculinity, but its foundation has all but eroded. Instead of questioning those ideals, they fall back upon those same traditional notions of manhood—physical strength, self-control, power – that defined their fathers’ and their grandfathers’ eras, as if the solution to their problem were simply “more” masculinity (Kimmel, 2012, p. 240).

Using social cognition as a lens provides a way to analyze the impact of social structures and patterns on individuals and how they in turn contribute to them (Hollander et al., 2011).

Understanding social cognition and social representations then provides the opportunity to correct misperceptions by emphasizing the healthy behaviors of the majority rather than looking to alter the unhealthy behaviors.

Socialization Processes

Literature on men and masculinity has explored numerous influences on their socialization processes. “Men are not born with masculine values. They are taught them by both men and women” (Farrell, 1974, p. 16). From a young age, boys see models of men who have strength, wealth, and power all while suppressing fear, emotion, and vulnerability (Farrell, 1974; Pollack, 1998). These model men often embody norms or perceived norms established through societal constructions.

These norms are transferred to men through media, sports, and connections with people in their lives. Mahalik et al. (2003) outlined three types of norms that influence men.

Descriptive norms are viewed as common male behavior and are often internalized through observation. Injunctive norms relate to how a man is supposed to behave. When violated, these norms involve consequences such as lost male privilege (e.g., not able to ask out a particular type of woman when you look a certain way or live with your parents). Lastly, cohesive norms are

tied to popular culture through powerful and popular people. For men powerful and popular people are often television and movie stars and athletes (Hatoum & Belle, 2010; Kimmel, 2008). College-aged and adult men often understand the realities of media and sports, but idolization still exists. Kimmel (2008) found men in his study used sports and media, particularly violent movies and video games, as a way to escape reality and reclaim their manhood. They knew these worlds were fantasy, but still longed to be like the actors they saw. Playing, watching, and/or talking about sports filled the same void. Knowledge of or current/previous competition in a sport, especially physically demanding sports like football, hockey, and extreme sports, increased feelings of masculinity related to cohesive norms (Kimmel, 2008; Mahalik, 2003).

According to Kahn (2009), another approach to understanding male socialization is through social constructionism. From this perspective researchers consider how men build their realities by observing the processes men use to define, explain, and react to their conceptions of masculinity. This perspective could explain changes to what encompasses dominant hegemonic masculinity. Social constructionism could investigate how language used by men with other men, or by men with women, generates or transmits gender expectations. For example, men's use of "gay," "fag," and "no homo" could relate directly to subordinated masculinity and show the continued devaluation of non-heterosexual men or things associated with femininity.

Social constructionism can also explain how men build their own masculinity through comparison to other men. S. R. Harper (2004) found African American men described their masculinity through dating, romantic and sexual relationships, competition, and accumulation of material possessions. In another study, Harris et al. (2011) equated masculinity to success inside and outside the classroom, avoidance of feminine behaviors, and sexist and restrictive relationships with women. These two studies illustrated examples of peer influence on

masculinity conceptualizations when considered through a social constructionist lens. Gender role strain/conflict along with the socialization process influences the way men develop a masculine identity. However, masculinity is not the sole component of a man. Various aspects of identity intersect to create men's total conception of self.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality considers the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of identity formations (McCall, 2005). Bowleg (2008) expanded the definition of intersectionality by stating identities are interdependent and mutually constructed rather than independent and one-dimensional. Researchers have developed models associated with particular identity status (e.g. lesbian, gay, and bisexual; African American; Latino; Asian; and Native American), but it is important to consider that no one identity makes up the sole aspect of a person's identity. According to Crenshaw (1991), for men, this means the development of their masculine gender roles does not occur in a vacuum or without the influence of other aspects of their identity playing a part.

Intersectional approaches help researchers better understand the complexity of human problems and the systems in which they operate (Dill & Zambrana, 2009; Shields, 2008; Strayhorn, 2013). Intersectionality seeks to the unveil the “power in interconnected structures of inequality” (Dill & Zambrana, 2009, p. 5). Intersectionality provides a connection between the literature on masculinity and gender role conflict and the queer theoretical perspective, described later in this chapter. Hegemonic masculinity, gender role conflict, and gender socialization each represent a process that elevates men and masculinity to a place of power. Men are considered dominant within the patriarchal society. Intersectionality, along with queer theory, offers a “lens for reframing and creating new knowledge because it asserts new ways of studying power and

inequality and challenges conventional understandings of oppressed and excluded groups” (Dill & Zambrana, 2009, p. 5). Intersectionality and queer theory offer an opportunity to investigate the power structures inherent in traditional hegemonic and societal conceptualizations of masculinity. Intersectional approaches have been utilized in several studies to explore the way identities relate to each other and how they are experienced within the larger culture (Dill & Zambrana, 2009; Shields, 2008)

The original Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (MMDI) described the process of multiple aspects of a person’s identity interacting and coexisting (Jones & McEwen, 2000). The MMDI considered various aspects of identity as orbits around a core set of values. Closeness of orbital dots to the core relates to the salience of these identities to the person’s overall identity. Salience of particular identities changes based on environmental influences. Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) updated the MMDI by adding a cognitive component to the model underscoring the interaction of cognitive and psychosocial identity development. This cognitive filter provided a lens through which people make meaning of environmental factors prior to them influencing aspects of identity. As college men engage in new experiences, they make meaning of these experiences before they interact with and impact their various identity components.

Bowleg (2008) described the interrelated and inclusive identities of Black lesbian women, noting researchers need to consider the impacts of stress, prejudice, and discrimination rather than focusing solely on demographic characteristics. The intersection of identity components can cause conflict for individuals (Ramachandran, 2005). This conflict comes from structural and political intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991). According to Crenshaw, structural intersectionality related to how multiple social systems impact, and potentially oppress, a person’s identity. Political intersectionality explained how different identity groups pursue

different political agendas, leaving some people on the outside looking in (Crenshaw, 1991). Political intersectionality in particular could explain conflict experienced by non-heterosexual men. Dominant hegemonic masculinity subordinates their sexual identity status, an aspect of their identity which may push for political changes to provide equal rights to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

In an autoethnographic study, Jones (2009) explored the intersectional identity experiences of a diverse group of participants in an attempt to understand how intersecting identities influence self-authorship. Analysis showed differences between participants with visible versus invisible identities. Furthermore, analysis showed it was difficult for those from privileged statuses to see intersections illustrating how race, class, and gender exert pressure on identity intersections.

Overall, when researching a particular identity, such as masculinity, it is important to consider other aspects of each man's identity. Asking open-ended questions to allow participants to consider their own personal history rather than boxing in identities will allow for greater clarity. Using multiple methods of collection can expand understanding of how students conceptualize particular identities and reveal identity changes otherwise unseen in static methods (C. E. Harper, 2011).

Relationship to Development

Gender role strain/conflict, socialization processes, and intersectionality all relate to development of masculinity. These processes begin early in life, influence the way boys are socialized, and shape how these boys develop into young and adult men.

Boys' Gender Development

The gender role socialization process for boys begins early in life and is often predicated on false and limiting stereotypes.

A myth has been created of the young boy as the rascal and the scamp, the mischievous lad who loves to run and be loud, whose pockets are filled with junk that he considers treasure, with a frisky puppy as his constant companion. He considers girls to be 'yucky'. He likes to go fishing and ride a bike. (Pollack, 1998, p. xxii)

Pollack (1998) stated boy babies tend to be more emotionally expressive compared to girls, but parents immediately begin a "gender straitjacketing" process restricting boys' emotions. Mothers tended to respond to boy's sad expressions with happy, soothing faces attempting to move boys to a sense of contentment. By the time they reach school age, boys express less sadness than girls, expect mothers and fathers to be less receptive to their feelings of sadness, and turn to anger to express emotion and avoid shame (Pollack, 1998).

These messages get absorbed into what Pollack (1998) called the Boy Code. "The code is a set of behaviors, rules of conduct, cultural shibboleths, and even a lexicon, that is inculcated into boys by our society – from the very beginning of the boy's life" (Pollack, 1998, p. xxv). This code begins the socialization for young boys and establishes an unattainable picture of an ideal boy.

Boys also construct their gender identity outside of their parents and families. Messner (2004) conducted an observational study of a boys' soccer team, the Sea Monsters, relative to a girls' soccer team, the Barbie Girls. Messner saw boys display a typical socialization process where they openly mocked the behavior of the girls' team all while parents watched and reinforced the children's sex differences. The soccer team brought young children together

along gendered lines allowing for the reinforcement of traditional gender stereotypes. Boys also learned how to balance and maintain a public and private identity through their classroom experience. Jordan and Cowan (2004) found boys realized the “warrior narrative” by which they originally defined their masculine identity did not fit within the context of the classroom. In the classroom they needed to maintain an ethic of rationality and responsibility and use fantasy and recreation to initiate their more active masculine conceptualizations.

Boys do not universally enact these “warrior narratives” or restrict their emotions. Way (2011) explored boys’ friendships, the impact of family, friends, and cultural norms on friendships, and how these friendships changed during adolescence. Way believed the Boy Code portrayed friendships in a negative light where peers enforced socialized male norms. Through yearly open-ended interviews with adolescent boys (14-18 years old), Way found during early and middle adolescence boys do have intimate friendships with other boys. These boys were most often at the top of the power hierarchy at school and had parents who provided safe spaces where boys could discuss their thoughts and feelings. Boys engaged in conversations about feelings and dreams and successes and failures all while appreciating the close friendships they had developed.

However, Way (2011) found everything changed in late adolescence. Boys wanted the continued connection of early adolescence, but, in fear of being seen as girly or gay, shut off these connections. Americans emphasis on individualism decreases community connections and links gender stereotypes and sex differences to particular human traits, behaviors, and sexualities (Way, 2011). In essence, cultural norms and expectations tell men they should be spending time developing close, coupled relationships with women and any lingering close connections with other men will be viewed as childish and/or homosexual.

“Boys, particularly those who are heterosexual, know by the ages of 16 or 17 years old that emotionally intimate male friendships are no longer possible in a homophobic context” (Way, 2011, p. 212). In an ethnographic study of one California high school, Pascoe (2011) examined the heteronormative and homophobic environments that produced masculine identities. Pascoe observed how group interactions were being reinforced by social and institutional gender expectations. Friendships and peer groups significantly influence students.

Over a year and a half of observation and 50 individual interviews, Pascoe (2011) found masculinity varies from boy to boy, and boys do not automatically internalize the concept of masculinity by virtue of being biologically male. Each individual boy had a different meaning and understanding of masculinity, which was often constructed by renouncing failed moments of masculinity. Furthermore, boys develop these masculine identities by mocking each other with homophobic remarks and talking about girls and their own sexual experiences. These results explain young men’s suspicions of male-male friendships and the regular justification of statements to their male friends by closing them with “no homo” to reinforce their heterosexuality.

As young men graduate from high school many will enroll in colleges and universities. Almost two decades of gender role norms and gender socialization have influenced their development. They have been taught maturity means to be autonomous, independent, and emotionally stoic. College and university faculty and staff face an uphill battle to reshape these patterns through curricular and co-curricular experiences.

College Men’s Masculinity Development

As young men transition into college, gender is often seen as a performance. “‘Doing gender’ means behaving so that whatever the situation, whoever the other actors, one’s behavior

is seen in context as gender appropriate” (Hollander et al., 2011, p. 47). This often leads men to perpetuate stereotypical behavior: exaggerating their physical attributes and stature, downplaying their emotions, and engaging in heavy drinking (Carlson, 2008). Overall, men should not act in a manner that could be seen as weak, particularly when viewed by other men (Carlson, 2008).

In an effort to adapt to these roles, men frequently put on a mask to play a part rather than be themselves. “Men’s gender identity development is described as a process of interacting with society’s expectations, putting on a mask to conform with these expectations, wearing the mask, and struggling to begin to take off the mask” (Edwards & Jones, 2009, p. 214). Edwards and Jones (2009) described how men cover their true identities with their mask and frequently behave in ways that go against their personal values without being aware of it in order to conform to society’s expectations. This means college men need to act as the breadwinner, display toughness, strength, and aggressiveness, and avoid peers who are openly gay (Harris et al., 2011). Therefore, college men engage in behaviors deemed socially appropriate in effort to develop interpersonal connections with other men and avoid being labeled as unmasculine (S. R. Harper et al., 2005).

The impact of the gender roles and socialization appears to be a subversion of personal values by what men interpret to be the true ideals of what it means to be a man. Men hide their true selves in order to abide by societal rules and expectations. Kahn, Brett and Holmes (2011) stated, “masculinity that rejects the norms of winning, disdain for homosexuality, emotional control, and self-reliance is not a competitive and hierarchical or dominant form of masculinity” (p. 76). That is, men reject anything that could make them appear weak.

In order to meet the expectations of masculinity, college men regularly make questionable, and often illegal, behavioral choices. Edwards and Jones (2009) found the

majority of judicial offenders are not just men, but men in their freshmen and sophomore years, who live on campus and are typically under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident. In fact many men see drinking as a symbol of masculinity and often drink to be manly (Lemle & Mishkind, 1989). College men are expected to party and binge drink, have meaningless sex with multiple female partners, break rules, and pretend not to study or care about coursework (Edwards & Jones, 2009). Men believe they are held to standards that encourage excessive drinking and regular casual sex while discouraging a focus on academics and involvement.

Expectations related to masculinity have begun to permeate the college environment beyond binge drinking and sexual partners. Carlson (2008) asked men to read three scenarios: one involving a fight, one involving a women being pushed around the street by a man, and the last involving a man having sex with a woman who was passed out in a room of other men who appeared to be waiting for their turn to have sex. Carlson then asked the men whether they would intervene in the situation. Carlson (2008) found the majority of men would choose not to directly intervene in situations involving fights and potential sexual violence and that the context of the situation played an important role. This raises concerns about how deeply men hold their masculine values and how these values impact decisions to intervene in potentially violent situations.

The freedom of college often leads men to act out socialized behavioral patterns. Foste, Edwards, and Davis (2012) and Tatum and Charlton (2008) found that after years of seeing college depicted in the media, men expected to party all the time and have sex with many different women. Men appear open to having exclusive relationships with women, but often end up backing out of these commitments in order to have non-romantic, sexual relationships with other women. In fact, many mention male peers giving them flack when they are in serious

relationships (Harris et al., 2011). Men also feel the need to show toughness through a willingness to fight other men, avoid close friendships with men, and compete in formal and informal settings (Foste et al., 2012; Steinfeldt & Steinfeldt, 2012).

Based on these findings one might think men need help. Referrals to campus counseling services could be useful for men to talk through issues confidentially, but research shows this is a challenge. Men with more traditional masculine ideologies were more likely to hold negative attitudes towards psychological services (Courtenay, 2011; Dannells, 1997). Regardless of the negative attitudes researchers have found the stress of living up to the male gender role causes negative health outcomes and increases in depression and overall psychological distress (Berger et al., 2005; Good & Wood, 1995).

Young adult men have an understanding of college based on media portrayals and, therefore, enroll in college with expectations about what it should be (Kimmel, 2008). These emerging adult men use their time in college to explore their identities, focus on themselves, and consider all possibilities (Arnett, 2012); however they do not always do this in developmentally responsible ways. This emerging adult “guyland” revolves around video games, partying, and an overall lack of attention to academics (Kimmel, 2008). Relationships are casual and the sex is pervasive (Foste et al., 2012). Expectations are so high some men find themselves hiding behind false selves and experiencing mental health issues (Edwards & Jones, 2009; Tanner & Arnett, 2011). The opportunity for self-exploration and decisions about future direction becomes a time to avoid responsibilities and live without consequences (Kimmel & Davis, 2011).

Queer Theory

“Queer refers to nonnormative logics and organizations of community, sexual identity, embodiment, and activity in space and time” (Halberstam, 2005, p. 6). This definition of queer

related to queer theory seeks to disrupt and deconstruct potentially predetermined conceptions of gender and sexuality with the goal of reconfiguring these normative conceptions (Carlin, 2011; Tierney, 1997). Queer theory has its roots in poststructural theory. “Poststructural theorists such as Foucault argue that there are no objective and universal truths, but that particular forms of knowledge, and the ways of being that they engender, become ‘naturalised,’ in culturally and historically specific ways” (Sullivan, 2003, p. 39). In this way, queer theory seeks to challenge how sexual identity and gender have been constructed and defined, and break down the frequently used binary categories, such as heterosexual/homosexual and male/female (Tierney, 1997). Queer theory considers identity as unstable and fluid due to continuous resistance to social constructions (Abes & Kasch, 2007; Butler, 1990).

Social constructions are often based on power dynamics. Those in power have the ability to construct the narrative, in this case related to gender and sexual identity. Queer theory attempts to counter these power dynamics by considering who is in power, how they define norms, and the relationships between those in power and the normed power dynamics (Seidman, 1996; Sullivan, 2003; Tierney, 1997). “The aim is not to abandon identity as a category of knowledge and politics but to render it permanently open and contestable as to its meaning and political role” (Seidman, 1996, p. 12). Identity categories need to be considered along a continuum rather than as binary categories.

Queer theory fosters “greater inclusivity, troubles the hegemony of gender identity labels more consistently, and tends to celebrate difference over assimilation” (O'Connell, 2004, p. 80). In pushing back against gender labels, queer theory considers gender and sexuality to be fluid processes that change related to the individual, the time, and the place. Additionally, it views identities as intersecting and resists oppressive societal constructions (Abes & Kasch, 2007).

“Queer theorists argue that identities are always multiple or at best composites with literally an infinite number of ways in which identity-components can intersect and combine” (Seidman, 1996, p. 11). Related to identity, queer theory explores (a) heteronormativity, creating a sexual identity binary and privilege to view non-heterosexuality as abnormal; (b) performativity, the idea that individuals perform their way into their identity by learning societal gender and sexuality norms; and (c) liminality, a state of becoming where an individual incorporates aspects of both ends of the binary and performs gender and sexuality in resistance to, and as part of, traditional dominant norms (Abes & Kasch, 2007).

Queer theory has seen limited use in student affairs and higher education research. Abes and Kasch (2007) and Abes (2008) explored the experiences of lesbian women and the manner in which they develop their sexual identity in conjunction with other aspects of their identity. In both studies queer theory was used to analyze the narrative of two participants from Abes’s longitudinal study. Viewed through a queer theoretical lens both participants described a process of breaking out of uncomfortable and confining categories and labels while resisting power structures that would otherwise describe them as abnormal (Abes, 2008; Abes & Kasch, 2007).

Queer theory has also been used to analyze experiences inside the classroom. Carlin (2011) used queer theory to facilitate a large-lecture course in English. She changed the course name from “Men and Women in Literature” to “Gender, Sexuality, Literature and Culture” in an effort to change the binary conversation from the beginning (Carlin, 2011, p. 55). Carlin encouraged student conversation in class through small group discussions and through required online discussions. More importantly, course lectures focused on deconstructing discourses around gender and sexuality and encouraged students to use the texts and assignments to challenge traditionally held norms and values (Carlin, 2011).

Similarly, Schippert (2006) described how she used her own body as a mechanism to challenge students preconceived notions of gender and sexuality. Schippert drew attention to aspects of her body and told students they are not allowed to pay attention to these body parts, which simply drew them in more. By drawing attention to her own body she allowed the students to consider how she was different from them and to consider how they had been socialized to notice the differences in other people. “Teaching with, through, and about (queer) embodiment can challenge students’ experiences of bodies as having unique, stable, unchanging, natural identities; it can critically engage ambiguities of embodiment” (Schippert, 2006, p. 282). Schippert integrated queer theory through class pedagogy. She asked her students to consider how the idea of otherness are created, what constitutes normal, and what assumptions are made about a person based solely on bodily characteristics.

A queer theoretical perspective was appropriate for this study because college men’s masculinity is constructed socially, culturally, and in opposition to what it means to be feminine (O’Neil, 2008). The traditional hegemonic definition of masculinity places one type of masculinity at one end of a spectrum with all other forms of masculinity on the other side (R. W. Connell, 2001, 2005). Masculinity is often culturally defined, so even in cultures outside of the United States, one form of masculinity is considered dominant and put in a place of power (S. R. Harper, 2006; S. R. Harper, Wardell, & McGuire, 2011; Liu, 2010). Since this study explored how traditionally aged college men work to build positive masculine identities, queer theory provides a means to work against the normative power dynamics. Finally, “because its impetus is the deconstruction of fixed identities and the dismantling of hierarchies, queer theory is both an appropriate and constructive tool in any intersectional analysis” (Carlin, 2011, p. 56). Using queer theory as the theoretical framework for this study provided a means to investigate how

men break down culturally dominant forms of masculinity, incorporate norms labeled as traditionally feminine, and internalize different aspects of identity.

Deficit Verses Positivity

This chapter outlined the literature used to frame and inform this qualitative study exploring the factors that influence positive masculinity development in college men. In developing and conducting this study I viewed gender as socially constructed within defined gender roles, which impact boys' and college men's development. Often societal messages originate from traditional hegemonic definitions of masculinity. Hegemonic views of masculinity reinforce patriarchy, subordinate women, and place some men above other men (R. W. Connell, 2001). As boys develop into men hegemonic definitions of masculinity begin to intersect with other aspects of identity leading to conflict and challenges in identity formation.

Overall, the literature framing this study is decidedly negative and deficit oriented even though the purpose of the study is decidedly positive. These deficit oriented studies focus on normative gender dynamics. The use of queer theory provides a means to counter those normative gender dynamics and deconstruct them. Additionally while deficit-oriented research is reflective of the current literature on college men and masculinity, it also reinforces the need for this, and other studies, exploring positive views of masculinity.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

Limited literature exists on positive masculinity development making the inductive approach of qualitative inquiry appropriate for use in this study. Grounded theory is an appropriate method of inquiry for this study given its purpose, exploring positive masculinity in college men and the factors that contribute to it. This study was conducted using a constructionist epistemological paradigm with a queer theoretical lens to answer the following research questions:

1. How do men negotiate their gendered identity as men in college?
2. How do positive and hegemonic masculinity change at the intersections of other identity dimensions?
3. How do college men negotiate, simultaneously resisting and reinforcing, positive and hegemonic masculinity?

This chapter provides an overview of constructionism and describes grounded theory methodology. Additionally, it outlines the data collection methods, including sampling, participant recruitment and selection, data analysis and coding, and trustworthiness.

Constructionism

Constructionism is the “view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Constructionism considers humans as meaning-makers, who

generate knowledge through experience and then transmit that knowledge to others through interaction. In blending constructionism with grounded theory Charmaz (2008) articulated four assumptions for her approach.

(1) Reality is multiple, processual, and constructed – but constructed under particular conditions; (2) the research process emerges from interaction; (3) it takes into account the researcher’s positionality, as well as that of the research participants; (4) the researcher and researched coconstruct the data – the data are a product of the research process, not simply observed objects of it. (p. 402)

Charmaz’s assumptions integrate with both constructionism and qualitative research. Related to constructionism are the ideas of exploring meaning through the individual’s interpretation and interaction with the world around them (Kafai & Resnick, 1996), the importance of knowledge generation from the participant’s perspective (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006), and interpretation, not simple observation, as a means of data construction (Crotty, 1998).

“Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). Qualitative research is exploratory research using an inductive approach, which often involves knowledge construction through connection with participants (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

Qualitative research has been used to observe men’s behavior in depth (Pascoe, 2011; Rhoads, 2010). It has also been used to construct theories in an attempt to explain some aspect of men’s behavior (S. R. Harper et al., 2005; Harris, 2010). This study will attempt to consider the factors influencing positive masculinity through a queer theoretical framework using grounded theory methodology.

Overview of Grounded Theory

I employed grounded theory in an effort to develop a model of factors contributing to college men's positive masculinity development. Grounded theory can be defined as a process where theory is "derived from the data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 12). Stated differently, grounded theory methods "consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories grounded in the data themselves" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2). Generating a theory using grounded theory as a method means the concepts come from the data and offer new insights based on the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory methods keep researchers close to their gathered data rather than to what they may have previously assumed or wished was the case (Charmaz, 2002).

Grounded theory was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and has since been expanded on by others (Birks & Mills, 2011; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Glaser and Strauss (1967) considered theory, and their formulation of grounded theory, from a sociological perspective. They believed theory could be used to predict and explain behavior, enhance the work of practitioners, provide a better understanding of behavior, and guide future sociological research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Therefore, grounded theory allows for data to be analyzed in new ways to explain behavior and provide new insights for practitioners (Charmaz, 2006). "Grounded theorists portray their understandings of research participants' actions and meanings, offer abstract interpretations of empirical relationships, and create conditional statements about the implications of their analyses" (Charmaz, 2005, p. 508).

Researchers implementing grounded theory strategies can respond to emergent questions and collect information on new insights simultaneously (Charmaz, 2005, 2008). According to

Charmaz (2006), it is important for grounded theorists to take control of the data collection and analysis process. Through intentional data collection and analysis, the researcher has the opportunity to build on levels of abstraction in the data by interviewing additional participants to fill in conceptual gaps and refine analytic categories (Charmaz, 2002, 2005).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) provided the foundation for grounded theory, but the methodology has evolved through the continuing work of both Glaser and Strauss and the work of other scholars. According to Charmaz (2005), over time, Strauss's vision for grounded theory explored how people developed, and redeveloped, processes and meaning throughout life. On the other hand, Glaser believed grounded theory should be connected to positivist traditions emphasizing logic, analytic procedures, and separation of researcher and participant. In Glaser's view the participants not only shared their story with the researcher, but told the researcher how to interpret it (Glaser, 2002). This has led to challenges for grounded theory researchers, who have conducted studies using a wide range of methodological frameworks. Various researchers (Birks & Mills, 2011; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) worked to provide clarity to grounded theory methods and articulate commonalities among the various methods. According to Charmaz (2002) all forms of grounded theory include the following strategies:

- (a) simultaneous data collection and analysis, (b) pursuit of emergent themes through early data analysis, (c) discovery of basic social processes within the data, (d) inductive construction of abstract categories that explain and synthesize these processes, (e) sampling to refine the categories through comparative processes, and (f) integration of categories into a theoretical framework that specifies causes, conditions, and consequences of studied processes. (p. 677)

Furthermore, Bryant and Charmaz (2007) added to Charmaz's (2006) strategies by reminding researchers to be mindful of how their interactions with participants and their knowledge of both the research topic and the setting can impact data collection and analysis.

Grounded Theory Methodology

I selected grounded theory not only because of the end product, but also because of the connection to the constructionist epistemological paradigm (Charmaz, 2005) and queer theoretical perspective. Constructionist grounded theory assumes we begin with some prior knowledge and theories about the topic of inquiry. Queer theory then works to break down prior knowledge and normative conceptualizations (Carlin, 2011). Although it appears constructionism and queer theory are in opposition, combining the two provides an opportunity to explore college men's positive masculinity development. Prior knowledge of men's negative behavior and adherence to gender norms provides context for the study, and an opportunity to overcome normative masculine concepts will allow the views and voices of participants to be integrated into a new theory (Charmaz, 2005).

Data Collection

Research Site

This study was conducted at a large, public, research-extensive, predominately white institution (PWI) in the southeastern United States, which will be known as Southeastern Research University (SRU). All study participants were undergraduates at SRU, the state's flagship institution. This site was selected due to student demographics, convenience for the researcher, and researcher understanding of the institutional setting. According to SRU's Office of Institutional Research Fact Book (2013, Fall), undergraduate enrollment was 26,151, with 11,271 or 43.1% men. The Fact Book does not disaggregate gender from any other demographic

information including age, race, ethnicity, or in/out of state status; therefore it is not possible to determine the number of male students in specific identity categories.

Sample

Purposeful sampling was used in this study. When using purposeful sampling researchers seek information-rich cases to gather detailed accounts of the topic of inquiry (Patton, 2002). The sample was comprised of participants based on the following criteria: 1) identify as male, 2) hold sophomore to senior academic standing, and 3) be 18-23 years of age. During the interviews, participants were asked to consider pre-college and college experiences; therefore students needed to be beyond their first year of enrollment at SRU. The sample included maximum variation, purposefully selecting participants with different group identities in order to gain an understanding of how personal characteristics impact the study (Patton, 2002). Maximum variation sampling was important to this study based on hegemonic masculinity and variations in masculinity related to group membership and identity status (e.g., race, ethnicity, sexual orientation).

Recruitment

Once SRU's Institutional Review Board approved the study, I emailed various SRU staff (e.g., residence, leadership and service) and requested they nominate potential participants by sending them my recruitment email (Appendix A). Staff members were chosen based on their direct work with students. My contact information was included in the recruitment email. I waited for students to contact me, confirmed their interest and screened them based on the inclusion protocol, and set up a first interview with each participant. Ultimately, eight participants formed the sample for this study. I remained conscious of participant demographics

and maximum variation sampling, and acquired a diverse sample without having to specifically reach out to a particular demographic. Participant recruitment ceased once I reached saturation.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were utilized. This approach allowed me to engage in a dialogue with participants while providing flexibility if new areas of inquiry came out of an interview (Patton, 2002). The semi-structured protocol allowed for investigation of life experiences of the participants (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). A semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix D) was developed based on current literature on gender roles, socialization processes, identity intersectionality, queer theory, and positive masculinity development as described in chapter two. Probes were used to clarify information shared by the participants.

Each participant was interviewed twice for approximately 45 minutes. Interviews took place on campus in a private conference room. The first interview explored broad topics related to masculinity development and influences on the developmental process. During the first interview participants signed the consent form (Appendix B) and completed a questionnaire (Appendix C) to collect basic demographic information (e.g., age, major, family background). The second interview was scheduled for approximately two weeks after the first interview. The first interview was transcribed and coded prior to the second interview. The second interview expanded upon themes from the first interview and asked participants to think more specifically about being a man in college.

Theoretical sampling was employed during the interview process to provide for further data collection based on the evolving concepts emerging from the initial data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). “Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and

where to find them...” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 45). By using theoretical sampling to refine categories and explore emerging themes, saturation was achieved and data collection concluded (Breckenridge & Jones, 2009; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Data Analysis and Coding

In their foundational work, Glaser and Strauss (1967) did not outline a detailed coding process. In their approach, researchers learn and understand the data analysis and coding process by doing it. Researchers have developed a coding process over time, determining “qualitative codes take segments of data apart, name them in concise terms, and propose an analytic handle to develop abstract ideas for interpreting each segment of data” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 45). Initial or line-by-line coding is the first step in the coding process (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006). This process allows researchers to consider the text of each individual line, remain close to the data, and compare new data with previous data. During initial coding, researchers consider detailed accounts of each individual experience as shared by participants (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2006). Focused or open coding follows initial coding; however, this is not a sequential process. Focused coding can begin as soon as concepts emerge across multiple interviews (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This process asks researchers to look across interviews, consider which codes compare participants’ experiences, and categorize data in an inclusive way (Charmaz, 2006). “Through comparing data to data, we develop the focused code. Then we compare data to these codes, which helps to refine them” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 60). Axial coding follows focused coding by linking subcategories to major categories at the conceptual level (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Axial coding creates major categories and brings the data together as a coherent, full picture (Charmaz, 2006).

In this study I employed a combination of grounded theory methods as described by Charmaz (2006) and Strauss and Corbin (1998). Based on a previous study of college men (Badaszewski et al., 2013) and another on identity development of Black collegiate women (Porter, 2013), this current study employed a two-part coding process, focused and axial. Both studies found participants had never been asked to consider these identity categories. Participants took more time to understand their experiences and share them. Initial line-by-line coding may not effectively tell the participant's story. Therefore, data analysis began with focused coding, using small sections of data and making connections across interviews (Charmaz, 2006), then moved to axial coding, bringing the data back together in new ways to form a new framework (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), to lead to theory construction.

Even though I did not engage in line-by-line coding I was mindful of each two to three lines. These represented the chunks of data during the focused coding process. As interviews continued I looked across interviews to compare focused codes and determine commonalities. As I began to conduct second interviews, I created a spreadsheet with participant pseudonyms horizontally across the top and the focused codes vertically in the left column. In total 105 focused codes were listed in the spreadsheet. I placed an "X" in the column of each participant to represent whether they discussed each focused code. This process allowed me to recognize which codes were more saturated and when overall saturation was reached.

After completing all interviews I wrote each focused code on a Post-It note and placed them on a wall. Then, I began the axial coding process by moving the Post-It notes around to form major categories. For example, the codes *stoic*, *men should show emotions*, *emotions important*, *men's emotion is anger*, *keep calm under pressure*, and *show love/appreciation*, formed the category *Emotions*. The axial coding process resulted in 105 focused codes forming

14 categories. These categories represent the participant's discussions and stories. These 14 categories informed the construction of a theory to explain factors influencing positive masculinity development in college men.

Queer Theoretical Lens

Data from this study was analyzed using a queer theoretical lens. Queer theory seeks to challenge how sexual identity and gender have been constructed and defined, and break down the frequently used binary categories, such as heterosexual/homosexual and male/female (Tierney, 1997). Queer theory attempts to counter these power dynamics by considering who is in power, how they define norms, and the relationships between those in power and the normed power dynamics (Seidman, 1996; Sullivan, 2003; Tierney, 1997). "The aim is not to abandon identity as a category of knowledge and politics but to render it permanently open and contestable as to its meaning and political role" (Seidman, 1996, p. 12).

While intersectionality was used to consider participants' individual experiences with masculinity and other aspects of their identity, queer theory offered a lens to view the participant's collective experiences and the overall model constructed from the data. As I coded transcripts, wrote memos, analyzed data, and ultimately constructed a model I remained mindful of queer theory's focus on considering power dynamics, breaking down binary categories, and creating open identity categories. This allowed me to listen to participant's stories and consider how their experiences reinforced or counteracted power and binary construction.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) articulated four criteria to establish trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility asks researchers to ensure the data collected relates to the concept being studied (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The challenge with

credibility in grounded theory is theoretical sampling. Since theoretical sampling looks different with each grounded theory study, it becomes challenging to develop a standard protocol to determine credibility (Breckenridge & Jones, 2009). This study utilized memo writing throughout the data collection and analysis process, as well as member checking to ensure credibility. Member checking provides an opportunity for participants to review interview materials and assess their accuracy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this study, participants were provided transcripts of their interviews as well as interpretations of data to review, clarify, and offer suggestions or different opinions.

Transferability seeks to clearly articulate the research process so it can be applied in other settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As the researcher it is my responsibility to provide thick description of my research process, so the reader can determine transferability. All participant descriptions, interview transcripts, memos, and other research notes will be retained for two years at the completion of this study for this purpose, at which point they will be destroyed per Institutional Review Board guidelines.

Dependability ensures the process and product of inquiry, the findings, and interpretations are supported by the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used memos not only to document my data collection and analysis process, but also to remain mindful of my own biases and assumptions about college men and masculinity development. Additionally, an inquiry auditor verified that the data collection procedures and coding were completed according to the protocol outlined in this dissertation and according to grounded theory methods.

Confirmability ensures that when provided with the data from a study other researchers can replicate the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A detailed audit trail is essential to the confirmability process. In this study, my audit trail included audio recordings, interview

transcripts, coding documents, and memos. In addition to utilizing an inquiry auditor to confirm the research findings as well as the data collection and coding process, I employed member checks. As discussed further in chapter four, all participants were provided with initial descriptions of the factors in the model and asked to provide feedback. Participants confirmed that while they did not see their experience directly in each factor, they did feel that the factors represented their overall experience.

Memos

As the researcher, I engaged in memo writing throughout the data collection and analysis process. “Memo-writing forces you to stop other activities; engage a category, let your mind rove freely in, around, under, and from the category; and write whatever comes to you” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 81). Memos were used to consider potential themes from each interview, lingering questions throughout the data collection process, and the rationale behind the construction of the final grounded theory. I wrote a memo after each interview articulating thoughts from the interview and connections between other participants’ interviews as well as across participants. I also wrote memos throughout the coding process to document the process and examine questions that arose.

Conclusion

In this study, I employed grounded theory methodology with a constructionist epistemological paradigm and a queer theoretical lens to explore factors influencing college men’s positive masculinity development. Theoretical and maximum variation sampling were used to identify participants with the assistance of SRU staff. I implemented a two-part coding process, focused and axial, to analyze participant words and stories. I employed various approaches to ensure trustworthiness and remain mindful of my own subjectivities. Throughout

the process I sought to develop a model, grounded in the men's experiences, to describe the factors influencing their positive masculinity development.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter will discuss the findings for this study. First, I briefly describe the participants. Next, I readdress the definitions of hegemonic and positive masculinity that guided this study. Then I discuss the 14 axial categories as supported by participant quotes that were informed by my original 105 focused codes. Finally, I conclude the chapter by describing the theoretical model formed from the axial categories and participant stories.

Participants

Over the course of the two interviews participants shared numerous experiences related to their overall development, their development as men, and their thoughts about masculinity. Participants ranged in age from 19-22 and the sample included two second years, four-third years, one fourth year, and one fifth year. Seven of the eight participants identified a city in Georgia as their hometown. Although participants had a range of academic majors, there was a strong connection to the business field. Four participants identified as White, two as Black, one as Hispanic and White, and one as Chinese. Two identified as gay and all participants had siblings. Complete participant information can be found in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Participant Demographic Table

Name (pseudonym selected by participant)	Age	Year in college	Major	Race	Sexual Orientation	Family Status	Siblings
Chipper	21	3 rd	Accounting & Finance	White	Straight	Two parent family	Brother (1)
Richard	19	2 nd	Economics & Ecology	White	Straight	Two parent family	Sister (1)
Chase	20	3 rd	Advertising	White	Gay	Two parent family	Brother (1)
Mark	22	5 th	International Affairs & MA in Public Administration	Black	Straight	Blended Family	Brothers (2) Sister (1) Step-sisters (3)
John	19	2 nd	Finance	Hispanic/ Mexican	Straight	Parents divorced/ Blended family	Brother (1) Sister (1) Step-sister (1)
Yuan	20	3 rd	Accounting & Sociology	Chinese	Gay	Two parent family	Brother (1)
Ralph	21	4 th	International Affairs	White	Straight	Two parent family	Sister (1)
Jim	20	3 rd	Biology/ Accounting	Black	Straight	Two parent family	Brothers (5) Sisters (2)

Hegemonic and Positive Masculinity

This study viewed hegemonic masculinity as the guaranteed dominant social position of men and patriarchy and the subordination of not only women, but also all things considered feminine (R. W. Connell, 2001, 2005). Positive masculinity was not viewed as the antithesis of hegemonic masculinity, but as “men breaking through gender norms to embrace an individual sense of self, a comfort in their own skin and a desire to help other people” (Badaszewski et al., 2013, p. 23). Men could have an individual sense of masculinity that aligns with the definition of positive masculinity, but still operate in a societal structure that reinforces hegemonic ideals.

This study sought to better understand the factors influencing positive masculinity. The findings support the definition articulated by Badaszewski et al. (2013), but also warrant a modification of that definition. Based on the experiences of the eight men in this study I would argue that positive masculinity can be viewed as men understanding and challenging gender norms and developing their own healthy sense of self and masculinity with the support of significant people in their lives. This definition is based on the experiences of the eight participants in this study and the experiences of the participants from the initial Badaszewski et al. (2013) study.

Axial Categories

Axial categories were formed through the relationships between the focused codes. Although each participant did not speak about each of the categories, the categories form an overall picture of the participants' experiences. The 14 axial categories that emerged are: *gender norms, individual masculinity, development of self, performance, life experiences, other men, friends, family, influence of women, role models, traits, values, benevolence/responsibility, and emotions*. Each of the axial categories will be explained in more detail below.

Gender Norms

Although a stand-alone category, the concept of gender norms permeates the majority of the axial categories. Many participants spoke directly about gender constructions and the gender binary whereas others shared stories that reinforced gender normative concepts.

Chase directly addressed the definition of masculinity. "Masculinity, it exists as a stereotype in my opinion, it doesn't exist in each of us, it exists as a social norm." Chase did not believe that a definition for masculinity existed; he felt that society constructed concepts that form masculinity. "I don't think that there's a definition that goes beyond having the anatomical

structure that makes you a man. [...] So I don't think that there is a definition that is specific to being a man that goes beyond anatomy." Throughout both interviews Chase regularly discussed how he did not believe in the gender binary and that he viewed people as people.

Jim described how people expected him to behave a certain way as a Black man. "And as I got older, like went through high school, I started realizing that a lot of people...expected me to be a certain way." Jim felt other people made strong connections between his racial identity and his gender even though he did make those connections for himself. "I don't really think about it, I don't really compare and like, oh, I'm a guy so I'm not supposed to do this or I'm a guy, so I'm supposed to do this and stuff like that, I just do whatever." Jim's awareness of gender norms led him to consider who he was as a person and ignore the expectations of others.

Chase and Yuan both described how being gay related to masculine gender norms. Both addressed the idea of being seen as more feminine, fashionable, and often being viewed as one of the girls. Yuan talked about being one of the girls with his friends in high school and conforming to traditional gay stereotypes, but making a conscious shift since coming to college. "Since coming to college I've definitely become more gender normative with my sex I guess. So the stereotypical masculine qualities, I've actually lined up a little bit more with my male sex." Yuan understood the gender norms typically ascribed to men versus women and chose when to confirm to particular norms.

On the other hand, Richard did not specifically mention gender norms, but gave examples of how he conformed to them. Richard stated,

Don't lose to [women] in competitions...So my personal goal was like...I will beat her time so it's just not like you got beaten by a girl which is I guess is always that even down

to elementary school it was an insult, especially for more guy-ish things like games, sports, oh pretty much everything was that in elementary school.

As Richard recalled his experience growing up he articulated expectations of being a boy. He was not supposed to lose to a girl and it was an insult if he did. Richard experienced gender norms even without naming them.

Individual Masculinity

As participants talked about their individual experiences it became clear that each participant had formed his own concept of masculinity. Mark stated,

I'm at this point whereas if you identify yourself as a man then you are a man even if you have qualities that I don't think are positive, you are still a man, you might not be a positive male role model, you may not be a positive male, but if you call yourself a man then you are one.

As Mark spoke about his masculinity he realized that he was different from other men. However, Mark also realized that he has seen so many successful men with different characteristics that it is hard for him to define one type of man or manhood.

The idea of a gender binary and gender norms influenced individual masculinity. For Ralph,

I think in my mind being a man is here and being feminine is here and I'm somewhere in the middle. [...] It's not that this end is weak, it's not the woman end is weak and the man is strong, it's just that there's a lot of feminine qualities over here where it has to do with feelings and whatever else and the masculine quality.

Ralph consider his masculinity along a spectrum with traditionally feminine qualities at one end and masculine qualities at the other, placing himself somewhere in the middle conceivably

representing a blending of the two. John stated, “I feel like I’m a man, I feel like I do what a man should do.” John did articulate non-gender normative characteristics related to his masculinity, but overall grounded his concept of masculinity in what men should be doing. Finally, Chase struggled to focus on masculinity. As he considered masculine characteristics he stated, “these things are not how I would describe myself as a man, these things are how I would describe myself.” Chase did not prescribe to a gender binary and worked to counter gender norms. For this reason Chase’s individualized masculinity was really individualized personhood.

Development of Self

As participants expressed individual conceptions of masculinity they also expressed a development of their own sense of self. Jim talked about self-realization stating,

I started realizing that if I'm just myself, like do what I like to do there will be those people that are like you're so white, you're so gay, I don't like you, blah, blah, blah and like will just give me a label but then there's always the people who actually see me for who I am, know me and like support my interests, those are the ones that kind of help me realize it doesn't matter, I can do what I want and made that flip I guess.

Jim faced criticism from peers and others in his life, but recognized he was happiest when he was himself and was involved in things that interested him.

Mark did not feel pressure to conform, but found college to be a time where he was able to better understand himself.

I really haven't felt much pressure or anything to be somebody that I'm not so, yeah I don't think there has been really a bad part about being a man on this campus specifically because I don't think I have had any pressure to be something, like I don't have to be aggressive or I don't have to do what typical men might feel are pressures...

Mark's involvement shaped his self-concept, as did his enrollment at PWI. For Mark, being the only black person in his organizations or classes helped him recognize how his race shaped his development.

Ralph talked specifically about his time at SRU and how college has been an opportunity to consider who he is. Throughout both interviews Ralph described how college was a time for questioning. He questioned his sexual orientation, what he wants in life, and who he wants to be in a relationship. College not only served as a space to focus on academics, but also served as a time for self-reflection and self-realization.

Performance

Participants described situations where they acted in a particular way to reinforce their masculinity, or, when safe, let go of traditional masculine ideals. John described a situation from his high school soccer team.

There was this guy on the [other] team and he would like -- he was being dirty the whole game and like after a little bit I was just tired of it and I was like -- and he slide tackled one of my guys and I went up to him even though I knew I shouldn't have you know, you shouldn't go up and confront somebody like another soccer player but like I got into his face and I started yelling at him...we got into like a pushing fight kind of when we were on the field, I mean that was kind of -- it wasn't really necessary, it was really kind of irrational trying to be too aggressive like I said earlier. I mean I wasn't really that mad about it, it was just I wanted to do something about it just like I could I don't know get this guy away.

Although John described how irrational it was to confront the opposing player, he felt that he needed to do something in order to defend his teammate.

John and Yuan described the role of their major. John felt that being in business gave him a “competitive edge” and taught him “how to be professional.” Yuan felt that as man in accounting, “I fit that mold of what people's ideal of an accountant is, I look like one, this is what you imagine, this is what I am.” Part of the masculine performance for John and Yuan revolved around their major and future career. As men in the business field they felt they were able to embody what other people expected in business people.

Several participants described conversations where they were vulnerable. These conversations always occurred with women, people with whom they felt they could truly be honest. Ralph stated, “if I was to talk about my masculinity I would probably not talk about it with a guy.” Richard believed that women would better understand the pressures he faced as a man and how he sometimes needed to act in order to deal with those pressures. He also felt that women had a better understanding of their own emotions and would be more supportive when he needed to talk about an emotional situation.

Chase continued to provide a counter-narrative to typical masculine constructions. “I haven't made the decision to do things that I would consider masculine like sports or whatever...so people are like look at this masculine guy...but they are masculine so that's a distinction there.” Chase described a distinction between how he viewed his involvement compared to how others viewed his involvement. He participated in activities he enjoyed and made him happy regardless of how they were perceived and whether the activities made him more masculine. However, because he was involved in sports outsiders automatically viewed him as more masculine without actually knowing him. However, because he was involved in sports outsiders automatically viewed him as more masculine without actually knowing him.

Chase witnessed masculine performance, but continued to choose his own path based on what he wanted to do, not what others expected of him as a man.

Life Events

As participants considered their masculinity and their self-concept they described the impact of life events and observations. For Chase,

People are so complex and so diverse in a lot of different ways that taking a handful of them and trying to guess how that's going to affect their experiences in college would be very difficult, I think, because there are so many other variables that could affect it.

Chase had his own unique life experiences that impacted his development, but realized that everyone has their own unique experience. No one event is the same and no one person experiences an event the same way.

Chase and Jim both described high school as challenging and a time when they were ridiculed for being who they are. Chase came out in high school and Jim was involved in events typically associated with women and gay men. These life events pushed Chase and Jim to recognize that regardless of the ridicule, they were happiest when they were true to themselves. Furthermore, they saw college as a more open environment with so many different people and people more accepting of difference.

Richard and Ralph experienced some benefits of being men in college. Ralph talked about being able to walk home alone and not worrying about personal safety on campus or in the community. Richard felt that as a man he was judged far less for his appearance compared to women. He believed both men and women constantly judged women for the way they looked and dressed whereas he had the freedom to look how he wanted without experiencing judgment from men and women. Ralph and Richard were benefiting from the gender norms associated

with men being viewed as physically stronger and being less concerned with physical appearance.

Chipper offered positives and negatives of masculinity. “It's very difficult for me to see these privileges that have been afforded to me. I could just be blind to them because I've been getting them my whole life and I do recognize that.” Chipper could not name specific privileges of being a White man in college, but appears to be aware that he was afforded privileges. While not as powerful as being able to name privileges, an awareness of privilege provides Chipper an opportunity to acknowledge specific benefits as they rise to the surface.

Chipper also described being stereotyped as a man in college due to the negative behavior of other men. Women have direct or indirect experience with men as aggressors, and because of that, women treat unknown men as a potential threat. While interacting with female friends in the downtown social sphere Chipper witnessed other women coming into the conversation because they do not know him and were concerned for the safety of their friend.

And like they'll run up to her side and try to be there...I'm not going to try anything and vice versa but it's kind of funny just to see -- like they get instantly defensive instead of being like oh okay -- people have friends downtown so you don't need to assume that every guy is trying to bring someone back with them.

The experiences of college women, the narrative around hooking up in college, and the negative behavior of other men influenced Chipper's interactions with college-aged women.

Other Men

Participants had strong negative, mixed with some positive, opinions of their man peers. Although some participants described man friends when talking about other men, most participants described other men that they did not know.

Another thing that people think that makes them a man...people think that wearing a polo shirt or wearing Sperry's or khaki shorts makes them a man or makes them a frat star as they say. And that drives me nuts, they don't -- you can't buy it, you have to -- it's a character thing, it's just how you treat other people, how you view yourself. Like it doesn't matter if you can buy the most expensive clothes if you have no confidence in yourself. It's not going to help you try to be a man per se and bring someone home from downtown.

As a member of a fraternity, Chipper felt that many of his man peers were soft, growing up in the suburbs with no understanding of the outdoors. Furthermore, he believed they attempted to buy masculinity through clothing and nice cars when in reality parents purchased those things for their sons.

Some participants compared themselves to other men. Richard felt "behind the eight ball compared to other men" and that he was "not as fast, not as smart, not as courteous." Mark thought he was more in touch with his emotions. "I believe stereotypical male behavior is a lot of times being shut off from not necessarily the world but just being shut off emotionally." Jim believed other men were more future oriented and used the future to determine decisions in the present.

Like I'm not really future oriented because to me like the future matters but a lot of my friends just kind of dwell on it and let that decide their life right now. Like if they're like I really want to do this but I feel like my future family will want me to do this so I'm going to do this... I'm not going to marry someone who is, one, not okay with my interests or, two, just like doesn't support my interests.

Jim acknowledges the future, but makes decisions based on his own self-concept, recognizing that future friends or partners will be chosen based on an appreciation of who he is, not a fake self created for someone else.

Participants had conflicting feelings associated with their man peers. Yuan and Mark both stated that they appreciated guy friends because according to Mark, “guys just leave you alone and do their thing. And then you’re just allowed to be who you are.” Yuan noted differences between his straight guy friends and his gay guy friends.

For me personally, ever since having a lot more just really chill, straight guy friends, nothing ever goes wrong, they don’t ever argue, they never fight, they are never dramatic, they don’t care what they eat, they just want food inside their bodies and a lot of it. It’s always just been so much easier to have a bunch of straight guys as friends, nothing -- it’s just so laid back where as a lot of times when I have gay friends, people don’t want to eat here or they don’t want to do this or they’re like I’m so tired, or you know whatever.

On the other hand, Chipper regularly felt challenged by his man peers.

You’ll hear people say I’ve never been arrested, I take care of my kid -- so this is a Chris Rock joke. And Chris Rock says, ‘well what do you want, a cookie?’ You’re supposed to do those things. That’s how I feel, I’m not necessarily proud that I do those things but I -- I don’t feel ashamed of myself but I feel just kind of annoyed with men as a whole when they [brag about not being arrested and taking care of their kids].

Overall, other men played a part in the experiences of the participants. Participants appreciated having close with men and the ease, to some degree, of those friendships. At the same time, participants used their man peers as a measuring stick and were bothered by some of their peer’s negative behavior.

Friends

Friendships, primarily with women, provided a positive influence on the participants. Chase described a strong relationship, primarily with a female friend from high school.

I tell my friends literally everything, the things I haven't told even my parents...you know friends are there not because they have to be you know like and that's a strong bond whereas family -- I mean they don't have to be and we see that sometimes, right, but there's something to say about choosing to spend your time with someone and that really helps make the connection stronger.

Chase saw friends as the most important part of his life, far beyond his family. Although other participants talked about important friendships, no one described relationships with friends as strongly as Chase.

Based on participants' stories there was a distinction between female and male friends. Richard noted that he did not connect well with men and that all of his close friends were women, which allowed him to talk about more personal things. Chase described a close female friend as "the rock," and said his closest male friend is fun but they only have "skin deep" conversations. Jim and Mark both described situations where they used different friends for different things. Mark described several close friends and how each fills a different role in his life.

In high school most of Ralph's friends were women. When he got to SRU he was living in an all first-year residence hall on a men's floor, which changed his friend group.

[I was] surrounded by a lot of males, when I came home and lived and I don't -- my friend group just got evened out in that, as a product of that I became I don't know -- I started accumulating all these more masculine traits or they started to show themselves

more because you know I was in situations where I'd come home and play video games and I liked playing video games or I would go to a football game and yell my head off and I liked that and you know other males around me did that and I felt that way myself. At SRU Ralph's friend group became more balanced, in his opinion, and began to shape how he behaved. At the same time Ralph described his friendships with women as deeper and more personal.

Jim shared a similar story. Jim noticed that his behavior changed when he was around the members of his all-male a cappella group, particularly how he talked about women.

I would be like that girl is like the bomb or something, not even that, I would be like do you think I could get her, something like that instead of I wish she would talk to me. I would be like do you think I could get her, do you think she's out of my league, do you think I'm like cool enough for her, stuff like that.

Although Jim spent a significant amount of time with these men, practicing and performing, he did not regularly hang out with them socially. He does not feel a close connection to them on a personal level and prefers to spend time with his close female friend, Erin. Jim said he may have the same conversation with Erin, but he is more open and vulnerable with her compared to his a cappella group.

Family

Family in general, and specific family members, formed some of the first examples of masculinity for the participants, often providing opposing conceptualizations. John saw his grandfather as a positive and supportive role model, someone who taught him to help others no matter what. At the same time, John described his uncle as disorganized and reclusive, traits he did not wish to embody.

Richard learned how to be a man from his father whom he described as being a blend of traditionally masculine and feminine roles. Richard saw his dad as a positive example; however, several participants did not talk about their fathers as positively. Ralph felt his dad was closed off emotionally and often cold and rude to his mom. Ralph's dad was a generous financial provider for friends and family, which was the only trait Ralph wanted to embody. Mark and Chipper both saw their dads' influence on their personalities, but for the most part they did not want to be like their dads as they got older.

Whereas participants had mixed feelings about their dads, they described many female family members as positive role models. Mark viewed his mom as a significant role model in his life. Through her he recognized that women and men are equals and that women can serve as the breadwinner. John talked about the impact of his grandmother dying and realizing that she will not be around to see his accomplishments or the accomplishments of his siblings.

My grandma, she was like a really good friend of mine like I miss her and...she's not here anymore, she's not going to be able to be -- like I can still picture her in my head doing stuff with her...But like now she'll never see me bring home my wife or something or like my kids or something like that and it's kind of a crazy thing you know to think about because she should be there you know, you always think about that and then you think about my brother or sister, she saw me graduate, before she passed away, from high school, but like she's never going to see them graduate, she's not going to be there for them.

John's relationship with his grandfather and his grandmother were important to his development. Even though his grandmother is no longer alive her presence in his life and the things they did together provided support for his development.

Influence of Women

As mentioned in other axial categories, participants spoke about the importance of their strong relationships with women. Richard talked about his mom. “Not saying that mom's a feminist but she definitely sees men and women as equal and that’s definitely rubbed off on me.” Richard was able to combine the ideas of being a gentlemen and being kind to women with the perspective of his mom to treat women equally.

Jim described the positive influence of his mother and grandmother. “My mom [and grandmother are] I think really positive role models...they're like really strong and even though sometimes they want things to go their way and if it doesn't they get a little upset, they never stop trying.” Jim described how his mother's and grandmother's positive attitudes in the face of adversity impacted how he responds to challenging situations in his own life. He does not let those situations get him down and tries to remain positive and look forward to the next opportunity.

Ralph and Richard spoke about the conversations that they had with women that were different from those that they had with men. Ralph offered,

I mean I guess my imperfections I talk to more about with girls -- I think they're much more attuned, A., with their emotional state, and also their imperfections. I think that girls harp on their imperfections much more than guys do and if I ever want to harp on mine I know that I can go to one of my girl friends and talk about mine and not necessarily it be a closed conversation but at least I can talk about it you know.

Richard shared,

My perspective of a situation that involves another female...I will want their perspective because I know that I could have a biased opinion and have no idea what this means,

whether body language, what she thinks is happening. So getting another woman's perspective, she might be able to translate what women are trying to communicate with. Although Ralph and Richard both spoke about strong relationships with their moms, both had strong female friend groups to which to turn. Ralph and Richard saw these relationships as a place where they could be vulnerable without judgment. Women were more likely to take the time to listen, provide advice, and take an active interest in the lives of the participants.

Role Models

In addition to family and friends, participants described other people as influencing how they considered their masculinity; however, most participants did not describe people in their immediate lives. Instead they described movie characters, movie actors, and characteristics of people. Chipper stated, “There's something about Dirty Harry, Clint Eastwood's character. Even though he goes a little bit outside of what's considered acceptable, he gets the job done, he's intense, he really knows how to flex when he needs to.” As Chipper watched movies he thought about the way the characters responded to situations and considered how he might respond to the same situation. Chipper considered these characters and their behavior as examples for his own life. For Richard, James Bond was a positive role model because he followed orders and completed the mission, but was a negative role model because “his playboy manner doesn't appeal to the pinnacle gentleman that I have in my mind.”

Some participants did find role models in their personal lives. John described his grandfather.

So I saw my grandpa and he's really like smart, he's a really smart guy. He takes his time with everything, he's really patient and really calm, really understanding and I see that -- he's kind of a big guy too and whenever he talks like everybody listens...He's always

trying to help people too, I think that's another part of being a man you're always trying to like do a little bit more for everybody else than just for yourself.

As he spoke about his grandfather, John was acknowledging a specific person in his life and specific characteristics that he wanted to embody.

Chase and Mark both commented that they do not seek out role models based on their masculinity, but because they are good, positive examples for their lives. Chase asserted,

I've never really looked at a role model in terms of their being a masculine role model...I can think of a lot of men that I like and that I look up to not because they're a prime example of what it means to be a man but that they're a prime example of what it means to be yourself and how being who you are can get you places no matter who you are.

Mark shared that when he seeks out or thinks about a role model he looks for women to fill that role.

So as far as role models and what not it's really only been the men that have been placed in my life, not necessarily men that I've like gone and sought out. So even when I look for role models it's weird that I will like typically go and look at a woman as a role model than like looking at this guy like a man figure.

Chase and Mark both considered people to be role models, but did not seek out particular people to serve as role models for their masculinity development. They sought to be good people and looked for role models that would help them attain that.

Traits

While participants spoke about specific role models, they spoke more about traits and characteristics men should personify. According to Ralph, men,

Drink excessively and they can hold -- they have a high tolerance to alcohol, they love to eat meat, they love to eat food, they love to pay for people and provide for people. They all have good jobs, they're all smart. They have their shit together but at the same time they definitely have some faults in the treating people like dealing with people area.

Ralph countered his traits for men by describing traits for women.

Whereas on the other side I have all these women in my life, my cousins, my sister, my mom, and my friends too, they're much more in tune with who they are, they're really good to talk to, they know how you feel, they are always there to take care of you when you're sick, you're sad, you know you're beaten down or whatever.

As Ralph listed traits for men and women his descriptions fit into gender normative stereotypes. He described himself as fitting in between those two extremes.

In general, participants described traits of caring for women, acting as a gentleman, and being physically strong and muscular. Gentlemanly traits revolved around women and included opening doors, paying for meals, walking on the side of the sidewalk closest to the road, and treating women with respect. Physicality was a prevalent descriptor for men. Mark and Jim both talked about being skinny and how people comment about them needing to be more muscular in order to get women. Chase provided a counter-narrative to the traditional definition of toughness and physicality. Chase believes he has a lot of toughness even though it is not physical. "I've gone through a lot and so I've learned to you know to really develop self confidence and stick up for myself but I don't have physical toughness." Chase articulated some similar traits, but thought about them in a different way based on his unique life experience.

Lastly, John spoke more about traits that he learned from his grandfather.

I feel like being a man also you have to be able to accept all different kinds of people because you can't just like isolate yourself from one group of people just because you don't agree with their beliefs or something. And he also told me one thing, he said like you know he always like told me that patience was the most important thing that someone could have and so just being patient with all different kind of people because not everybody is like you know.

As John thought about his grandfather he considered him a role model. Additionally, he took away traits and characteristics based on the lessons that his grandfather taught him and the behaviors of his grandfather. John learned to be patient with others and to value all people regardless of their differences and point of view.

Values

Interconnected with the role model and trait themes was the values theme. Values were beliefs and ideals to which participants subscribed. Participants spoke about values as a lens to view the world and a way to determine how they would live their lives. Chipper continued to use movie characters as examples, in this case for his values.

I think of Marcus Aurelius in Gladiator. I think of Russell Crowe's character and just like how he's standing up to the Emperor of Rome and just like tries to defy him and he does what he thinks, what he wants, he doesn't let anyone else try to tell him what he should believe.

Chipper felt it was important to understand what you think and then stand up for those beliefs even in the face of adversity. Chipper lived these values as a Jewish man at SRU.

Yeah, I mean being Jewish at a large, public institution like this, it really has forced me to stand up for what I believe in because like when I was going through rush, it would be

very easy for me to just kind of -- not necessarily hide in the shadows but hide who I was. I didn't think that was fair to them and I surely did not think that was fair to myself. So I made it clear like, oh, where'd you go to high school. I went to Webber. Is that the Jewish one? Yeah, it is. I didn't hide from it.

Being Jewish is an important aspect of Chipper's identity and how he approaches his life. As he encountered a completely new environment at SRU he had choose to stand up for his beliefs and his values as he began to interact with new people.

The concept of being a gentleman was also described as a value. As a trait, being a gentleman was described as something that you should do or a characteristic visible in others. As a value, participants described it as something they actively did and as something they truly believed to be important for them individually. Jim shared,

I think I like to try to be like a "gentleman" like that phrase or whatever, just like the traditional term, gentleman, like the characteristics associated with it. Like just being polite, treating everyone with respect, understanding that people are like different from you and then just like using my personality and my characteristics to make people understand that like they're loved and that they're appreciated and that they're understood.

For Ralph being a gentleman meant going deeper.

So I guess I pride myself on being a gentleman but also like to me I'm much rather get to know someone first than just be physical in a relationship I guess, or not even that, like friendships, I would much rather get to know who you are and why you make the decisions that you do on a daily basis than just you know what drink do you like, what food do you like, and the activities that we share together.

As Jim and Ralph talked about being gentlemen they described it as more than simply holding doors and paying for meals. Both men talked about truly knowing and caring about people in their lives. Being a gentleman was about getting to know people on a deeper level and appreciating the unique differences.

Mark took the idea of care for others even further.

I think that's what drew me to this study just because I was trying to figure that out in my -- for myself on what it exactly it means to be a man. I think it means a lot of things, one, just what does it mean to be like a person or just a citizen, just being somebody that's of your word, being somebody that's loving, that really is in service for others. Those are kind of the values that I try to live my life by.

As Mark shared his values he began to talk about thinking beyond himself and beyond his own family and friends. Mark valued positive citizenship and serving others in his community.

Benevolence/Responsibility

Participants talked specifically about being responsible for and helping other people. Yuan spoke about how his gender does not automatically have a positive influence on anyone. The positive influence came from his actions and deeds, which he summed up by saying, "my actions speak louder than my gender."

After his parents got divorced John had to watch his younger brother and sister after school. For John "that kind of took like a little responsibility on my part" and also influenced him having more patience. Whereas John talked about a personal situation that increased his sense of responsibility, Richard and Mark talked more amorphously. Richard aimed "to be the best person you possibly can and to really and truly help others." Mark's mother, a teacher, taught him that it is important to treat others with kindness and "understanding like where you

are in society and helping those who are -- helping either the female gender or those who identify as something outside of just the traditional male and female gender.” Mark did not mention specific ways he would help other people, but acknowledged that it was important as a man to help others regardless of their place on or off the gender binary.

Chipper and Ralph described responsibility and benevolence through involvement. As a member of the Academic Honesty Council and Peer Conduct Board, Chipper felt a responsibility to uphold SRU policies for the benefit of all students “because if you're not honest in all of your academic attempts then what is the value of that degree that you try to hang on your wall, the value of everyone else's degree.” Ralph joined service organizations because service is an area of passion for him. He felt that as a man he had a responsibility to help others through service. “I think it's important to have guys in some of these service organizations because, A., it changes the face of who can volunteer, but B., you just need a balance, you need diversity and that’s part of it.” As a man heavily involved in service, Ralph was trying to do his part to help others and encourage other men to get involved in service activities.

Emotions

Participants described emotions as an important part of being a man. As the men described emotions two concepts emerged. First, most other men express emotions through anger and aggression and second, men had to make conscious decisions to be emotional and were more likely to be emotional with women.

Chipper said, “Everyone says a man should be stoic and not show any emotion but I don’t think that’s necessarily true.” Chipper disagreed with the norm that men should be emotionless, but still observed that was the norm. John stated, “I feel like a lot of guys today are either really, really aggressive or really, really timid you know. And I feel like I'm a pretty good

balance of that.” Even though John placed himself in the middle of the continuum, he talked about situations he experienced with overly aggressive men.

“So as a man I think I represent a different side of things, I am not afraid to be like emotional, I communicate well with others.” Mark embraced his emotional side even though it was contrary to gender norms. “I don’t want to stereotype people but I mean typically guys my age are not really thinking about the emotional side of things.” Mark was consciously aware of how he was different from other men based on his comfort with emotions and expressing them.

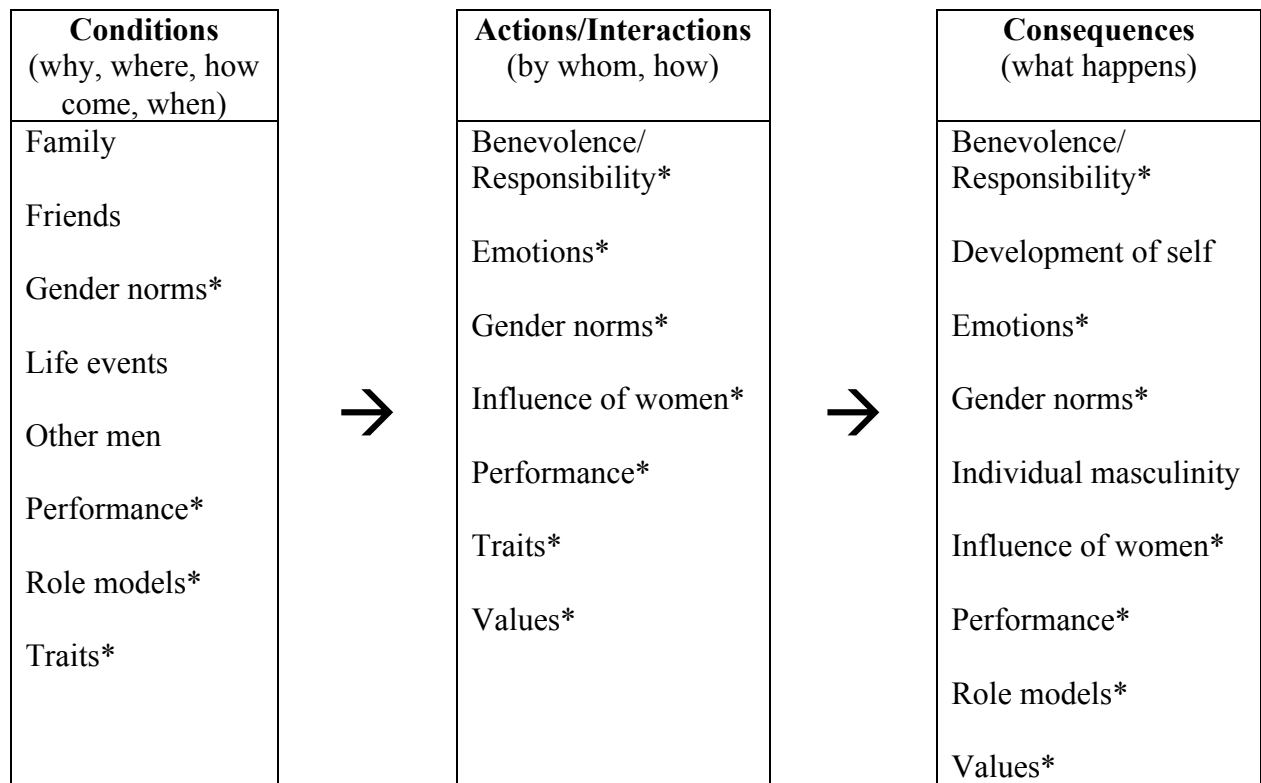
Richard talked about the differences between how men and women express their emotions.

Occasionally I do like guys but if they want to express emotions it's usually just ranting in a rage while women are more -- you know they're just women, I can't identify emotions and sometimes neither can they. As they have told me they don't know what they are feeling but they just feel like when they want to talk, they talk and I'm just like I am more than happy to listen.

Richard did not have close connections with men, and was drawn to women more frequently. He believed women were more in touch with their feelings and emotions and would be more likely to support him during difficult stressful situations. Ralph talked at length about his friendships with women and how those friendships allowed him to easily express his feelings without judgment. Ralph also described how he approaches romantic relationships with women. As he considered potential partners he was looking beyond simple physical attraction for deep emotional connection and support.

Considering Conceptual Relationships

The 14 categories identified during axial coding were organized into conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) in order to make sense of conceptual relationships between and among the axial categories, leading to theory construction. According to Strauss & Corbin (1998) *conditions* form the structure for the phenomena being studied, *actions/interactions* are the ways participants respond to the conditions or handle a particular situation, and *consequences* are the results of the actions/interactions. I used this organizing scheme to consider the 14 axial categories. In doing so, I realized that several categories fit into multiple categories depending on participant's specific experiences. Figure 4.1 depicts the axial categories within the conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences sections.



* Category listed in more than one column

Figure 4.1: Axial coding

Gender norms*, family, other men, life experiences, performance*, role models*, and traits* were considered conditions because they formed the structure for positive masculinity. I listed emotions*, traits*, performance*, benevolence/responsibility*, influence of women*, gender norms*, and values* under the actions/interactions scheme because they described how the men reacted to people and the environment. Finally, the results of actions/interactions formed the consequences: individual masculinity, development of self, role models*, values*, influence of women*, emotions*, benevolence/responsibility*, performance*, and gender norms*. Several axial categories overlap the three schemes. For example, gender norms and performance can be found in all three schemes and emotions and benevolence/responsibility can be found in actions/interactions and consequences. While exploring a particular phenomenon it is important to look for patterns of behavior and responses to situations. Therefore, in considering placement of axial categories, overlap is a result of the way the participants spoke about their experiences as men in college and how those experiences formed the focused codes and thereby the axial codes.

The model, described in detail below, was constructed through a process of reflection on and consideration of the axial categories. Using the Post-It note diagram, I explored the relationships within and between axial categories and how they related to and influenced each other. For example, I considered the within category characteristics of family since participants described positive and negative connections with family members. I also considered the between category relationships. Participants described the influence of women in connection with family, friends, and life events.

In addition to considering the relationships within and between axial categories, I reflected on the conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences of the coded data. Normative

masculinity, the overarching structural factor in the model, was constructed through consideration of gender norms, life events, and performance, all conditions in Figure 4.1. Participants negotiated masculinity as one way of responding (i.e., actions and interactions) to conditions. Participants responded through interactions with family and friends and by developing their own sense of sense. The arrows in the model also show responses to conditions since positive masculinity is influenced by the factors and also influences the factors. Lastly, reflecting on the consequences provided the overall conceptualization of the factors and the model. By thinking about the stories the participants shared and relationships within the axial categories, I was able to construct a model that represented participants' experiences.

Factors of College Men's Positive Masculinity Development

Many faculty and student affairs practitioners utilize student development theory to ground their work with college students (Jones & Abes, 2011). These theories and models provide one way to understand the overall development of college students and how best to support them. The purpose of *Factors of College Men's Positive Masculinity Development* (FCMPMD), developed from this grounded theory study, is to help practitioners better understand the men on their campuses, work with them more effectively, and provide opportunities to test the new model. After the FCMPMD was initially constructed, participants were asked to evaluate the model. I emailed each participant a description of the model, without an image, for his feedback. I asked each participant to consider two questions: 1) How are your experiences represented in this model? If you do not feel your experiences are represented, please discuss; 2) What else would you add to this model (e.g., specific experiences, support systems, things you have learned, etc.)? Five students responded to the member check email. Mark responded, "I do believe my experiences have been captured in this model...I believe that

this model is broad enough to where it accurately encompasses the things I have experienced as a college male on [SRU]'s campus.” Yuan felt that the conclusions were “concurrent with his current perceptions.” John recognized that “gender norms are always going to be a part of a man” and the “life as men” factor is particularly important because “real men are just themselves with their own guidelines and when I realized that, being a man became a little bit more to me and now I feel like I can start living up to my moral code.”

This model does not seek to speak for all undergraduate men or seek to treat all men the same. Although the 105 codes are represented in the 14 axial categories and the seven factors of the model, described below, each participant articulated his experience in his own unique way. Therefore, all eight participants are not represented to the same degree in each factor. However, of the five participants who responded all agreed that the model spoke to the experiences of men even if each factor did represent their own specific experience.

In analyzing the relationships between and among the axial codes seven factors emerged that influence positive masculinity development in college men. These factors are: *normative masculinity*, *self*, *family*, *role models*, *life as men*, *perceptions of male peers*, and the *importance of women*. First, normative masculinity operates in the model as a factor in which positive masculinity, and the other six factors, exist. Societal gender norms are an ever-present force on the participants and their positive masculinity development. Second, self describes the way participants found their own voice and their own sense of masculinity. Third, family and role models provided positive and negative examples how to handle life situations and be good human beings. Fourth, participants described how life as men shaped their masculinity development. Finally, their perceptions of male peers and the importance of women shaped their behavior, whom they chose as friends and confidants, and what they shared with those closest to

them. Figure 4.2 combines all factors into the full model. The arrows indicate the direction of influence. All influences except for role models have a dual directional arrow meaning that factor influences college men's conceptualization of positive masculinity and is influenced by that same conceptualization.

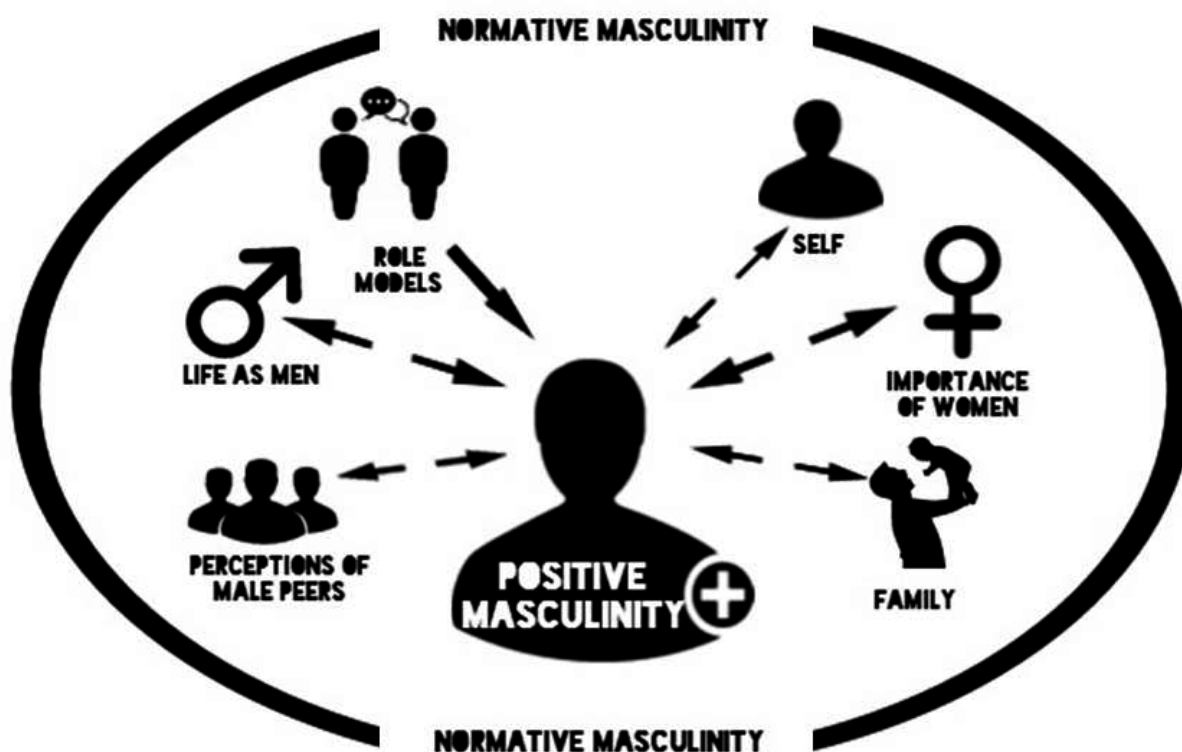


Figure 4.2: Factors of College Men's Positive Masculinity Development

Model created by P. D. Badaszewski (2014).

Normative Masculinity

Normative masculinity represents an overarching factor within the model. As an influence on positive masculinity, participants talked about normative masculinity related to behaviors they engaged in and activities in which they participated. Ralph stated,

So now I guess my definition would be more of not only like -- so like, I guess yes, liking certain things. Like I definitely attribute part of manhood is liking sports or you know

doing certain things, going out with my guy friends, having lots of guy friends, joking around and being able to do that kind of stuff.

Jim spoke about his high school experience and how he was ridiculed for being in theatre and choir because those activities were considered less manly. Participants recognized the gender norms considered appropriate for men and often felt pressure to engage in, or refrain from engaging in, certain behaviors or activities because of these norms. Jim also talked about the impact of gender norms specifically related to women.

I feel like girls constantly have to worry about everything, like how do I look, how do I smell, do I sound smart or do I sound too dumb, do I sound like a stereotypical sorority girl, do I sound like an athlete, do I sound like a lesbian, do I sound like -- you know just negative connotations, things that they see as negative connotations, they can like put themselves -- I feel like they have to think about it a lot.

Not only was Jim articulating normative aspects of gender, he was also describing how he felt women were negatively impacted by these gender norms above and beyond men.

On the other hand, over time, participants challenged normative masculinity and binary gender construction. Jim and Chase described how people need to be who they are regardless of their gender. Chase shared,

I know plenty of people whose sex is male who like sports and whose sex is male and who hate sports. And you know people that are into dancing and -- so things that are not normal gender roles. So I don't think that there is a definition that is specific to being a man that goes beyond anatomy.

Chase and Jim both described non-binary gender constructions and how they considered gender and identity as separate concepts. People could embody whatever characteristics fit them and

should work to be good citizens regardless of their gender and gender norms. Jim and Chase considered it important to be better people not better men. Figure 4.3 represents the axial categories participants described related to normative masculinity.

NORMATIVE MASCULINITY

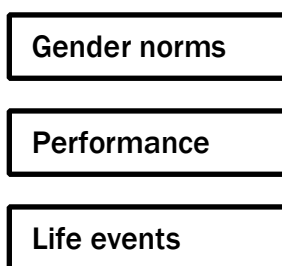


Figure 4.3: Normative masculinity

Model created by P. D. Badaszewski (2014).

Self

Related to countering gender norms, participants talked about the importance developing a strong sense of self and their own concept of masculinity. According to Mark, “you’re a man if you say you are.” For many participants their definition of masculinity became more complex and less definitive over time. Jim shared,

It became like the word man and the associations of like the other things I do and just my interests and who I am, it became less of like a tug of war, like a back and forth between them, and more of just like they like melt together now because there are so many other guys here that have the same interests as me, do the same thing, so it's not like I don't really think about it, I don't really compare and like, oh, I'm a guy so I'm not supposed to do this or I'm a guy, so I'm supposed to do this and stuff like that, I just do whatever.

Mark acknowledged that strength is often considered a masculine trait, but that it needs to be about more than physical strength. “I feel like I'm very strong in character...so as a man I think I

represent a different side of things, I am not afraid to be like emotional, I communicate well with others.”

Participants described being a man as knowing who they are as individuals, acknowledging their identities, and standing up for their values and beliefs. For participants with underrepresented identities this meant considering how their race and/or sexual orientation related to their identity as men. Yuan felt comfortable expressing himself in flamboyant ways when he first came out even though those behaviors are not traditionally considered masculine. Jim described being called gay and White because he was involved in theatre and music, which were activities at his high school with primarily gay and White membership. Each participant articulated how he came to know himself and develop his own identity.

Mark and Yuan talked about the impact of race and ethnicity on the masculinity. Mark stated,

I see my race playing into that just where Black males in general are stereotyped to be one way or are viewed as one way even if the person doesn't come in with that stereotype in mind, they're still viewed to act a certain way and when I may break that mode it surprises people, it might bring like a delightful sort of surprise but the fact that it still surprises people.

Mark experienced stereotypes and norms related to both men and Black men. He recognized that his actions and behaviors often ran counter to those norms and expectations.

Yuan gave several examples of how being Chinese and male was a benefit and a challenge. As he discussed differences between Chinese men and women he shared, “Being Asian and male there's always that pressure to be like successful” whereas being a “Chinese female is kind of like you're just going to marry off somewhere.” As a Chinese man, Yuan felt

pressure to “generate success.” At the same time being Chinese and gay challenged the heteronormativity of Eastern culture. Yuan stated that as soon as the gender of a Chinese child is determined the family begins to plan for whom they will marry. That marriage then leads to more children. As a gay man he challenges those norms. Figure 4.4 represents the categories participants discussed related to self.

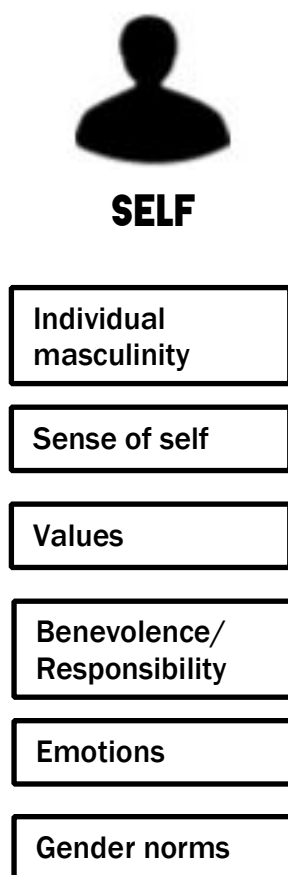


Figure 4.4: Self

Model created by P. D. Badaszewski (2014)

Family

Family played both a positive and negative role in the lives of participants and their development as men. For the majority of participants, family, or a specific family member, played a positive role in their lives. For John and Chipper their grandfather was respected within

their family and taught them the importance of patience and going out of your way to help other people. Many participants spoke about the positive role of female family members. Ralph's mom and older sister taught him how to be a gentlemen and a good man in a relationship. Mark's mom taught him how to remain positive and persevere in tough situations. Participants also talked about how they influenced their family by being strong role models. Richard stated, "I find myself where I should be good, I should be honorable and courteous and what other people should expect from a good guy being that man's man I guess for my younger cousin who is also a guy." Responsibility to younger family members was not restricted solely to younger men, as several participants spoke about serving as a good role model for younger siblings and cousins regardless of gender.

Family often provided examples of things participants did not wish to embody in the future. Chipper and Ralph talked about not wanting to be like their fathers because they were closed off emotionally and were too cautious in their lives. At the same time, Chipper and Ralph wanted to take certain traits from their fathers, such as generosity and providing for others. Jim spoke about the negative behavior of his older brothers and how they disrespected people, especially women. Chase often felt like the odd person out in his family.

I've always joked with my mom about being adopted because like I just whenever I go home I notice it more and more they are just much more opinionated than I am, much more argumentative. I think I might be who I am as a result of them but not in the normal way, I think I might have developed some opposite traits because I saw the negative ones that they exhibit all the time.

Finally, Yuan described his upbringing as being challenging. When Yuan's parents found out they were pregnant they initially did not want to keep him and only did so after his

grandfather convinced them it was the right thing to do for their family. In addition, Yuan's parents were in a difficult financial situation when he was 15 and left him alone in the U.S. when they decided to return to China. Both of these examples helped Yuan develop a strong sense of independence, but were connected to the negative influence of his parents on his overall development. Figure 4.5 represents the categories participants discussed related to family.

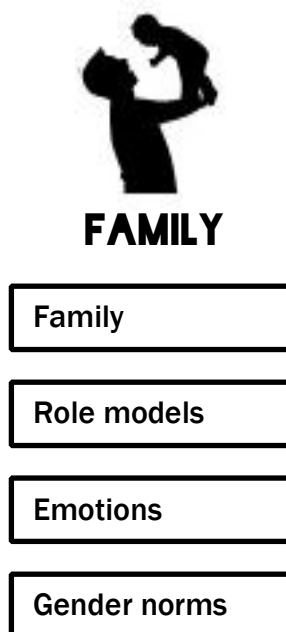


Figure 4.5: Family

Model created by P. D. Badaszewski (2014).

Role Models

Similar to family, role models formed positive and negative examples in participant's lives. Chipper described several of his fraternity brothers as negative examples of masculinity. While their behavior could be described as stereotypical of men (e.g. drinking, smoking weed, ignoring their academic responsibilities), Chipper considered them as negative examples and people he did not want to model himself after.

Participants had a difficult time identifying role models from people in their immediate lives. They could articulate traits and values of people, but, for most participants, one person did not embody a role model in their immediate lives. Chipper stated,

And it's just thinking that seeing more of the way people act, just saying okay, I like that characteristic, I'm going to try to pull that in... Just seeing like what are their kind of cultural things and trying to pull that into my development.

However, several participants named movie characters or celebrities as people they connected with as role models. Participants held the on screen and public behaviors of certain movie characters and actors in high regard and considered them as role models for their own lives even though they did not have close personal connections with them. Figure 4.6 represents the categories participants discussed related to role models.

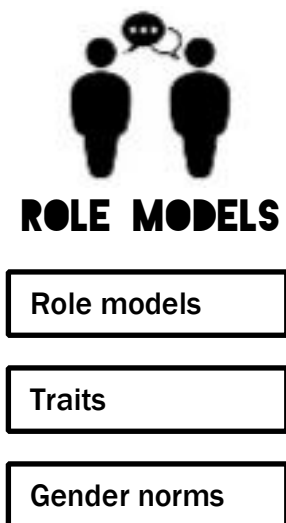


Figure 4.6: Role Models

Model created by P. D. Badaszewski (2014).

Life as Men

Although gender was often not a salient aspect of their identity, participants experienced life events in a particular way because they are men. John and Richard both talked about how it might have been easier for them to get a resident advisor position because fewer men apply and this year an all-female residence hall became co-ed so more men needed to be hired. Overall, participants thought it was easier for men to be involved because most organizations want more male members.

Gender performance was another aspect of men's life experience. Ralph described being at home with some high school friends.

We all got really drunk one night and had a party and had a lot of fun but it was just us, like the five of us. At one point, one of them used to be a high school wrestler, he's 28 years old, he has a fiancé, he has his own house, he's got all of his stuff in order, but he goes, you know what, I haven't like been physical in a long time like let's wrestle. So all of a sudden we all get on the porch and then one by one we wrestle each other and just for no good reason but at the end of it we all were hurt and banged up and felt awful the next day but at the end of it we just felt really satisfied and really happy because like we could be stupid, we could be stupid boys or whatever you want to call it.

Jim shared an experience with his all-male a cappella group.

So it's weird, sometimes I feel like I reinforce stereotypical male behavior but I only notice it when I'm around a bunch of my male friends and they're like all doing something that's stereotypically male like oh, did you see that girl, like oh she was so hot, she was so fine, did you see her legs and stuff like that. And then I'll be like, you're right

and I'm like whoa, why did I do that. Normally I wouldn't be sitting there like, whoa, that girl's legs are really nice, so it's weird.

Although Ralph and Jim shared non-gender normative experiences, they were also influenced by gender norms. They behaved in particular ways around other men compared to how they might behave around women.

Mark and Jim stated that compared to women it is easier to be a man and be who you are. For Jim, that meant being involved in theatre and choral groups without being ridiculed as he was in high school. Mark felt he could be who he wanted to be as a man without people judging him. He believed it was harder to be a woman because both men and other women judge women harshly.

Although the participants felt it was easier to be men in college, they did want support from SRU, which they said was limited. Participants did not mention institutional staff or offices as providing support for their masculinity development. Mark offered that when SRU staff members talk about diversity and having challenging conversations on campus it is all about race; gender is never considered as a part of that conversation. Figure 4.7 represents the categories participants discussed related to experiences as men.

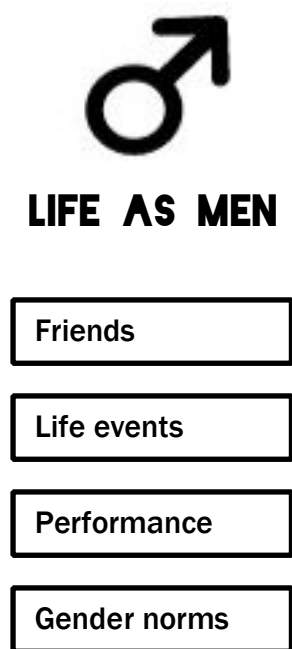


Figure 4.7: Life as men

Model created by P. D. Badaszewski (2014).

Perceptions of Male Peers

It is important to note that throughout this dissertation I consciously use man/men rather than male because I am describing gender and not sex. Here I intentionally use the word male because participants assumed masculine gender performance meant the individual's sex is male. As they described their masculine identity, the participants regularly compared themselves to male peers, describing their negative characteristics. Their peers were more interested in binge drinking, drug use, and casual sex with women. Chipper talked about the behavior of some of his fraternity brothers.

I mean a lot of them just sit around all day not doing anything, just sit in front of the tube or get high and watch the tube and...that's just not for me, I want to be more active so I kind of have tried to be the opposite of them.

Chase talked about how other men have emotions, but they rarely express them.

I guess I'm really kind of turned off by the whole like hyper-masculine persona, like it kind of grosses me out to be completely honest, I just feel like...it's so alien to me, those people that they are like walls, they have no emotions and all they do is drink and play corn hole.

Generally, participants believed that men used aggression and anger to convey their feelings. Furthermore, there was a perception that men were less friendly, but were stronger and more physical. For example, Jim shared that although he enjoys the other men in his a cappella group he often does not socialize with them outside of rehearsal because he does not feel close to them and they often mock him for being too skinny.

The participants continuously compare themselves to their male peers in an effort to both see how they stackup against them and also to distance themselves from their peer's negative behavior. John stated, "Compared to other guys though I feel like I'm a really good balance of like understanding and being aware." As they described the characteristics of their peers, the men in this study were articulating personal qualities they felt made them good men. Figure 4.8 represents the categories participants discussed related to perceptions of male peers.

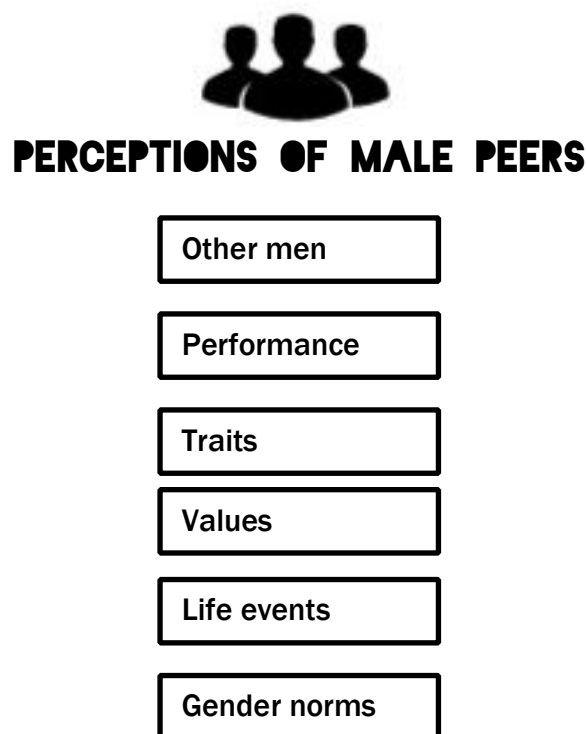


Figure 4.8: Perceptions of male peers

Model created by P. D. Badaszewski (2014).

Importance of Women

Finally, women were an important factor in the lives of men. Richard, Mark, and Chase all described that they had closer friendships with women. They felt comfortable being more vulnerable with their female friends, talking about their emotions, and showing their emotions. Chase stated he did not know what he would do without the support of his women friends and that he has shared things with them that he has never told his parents. Ralph shared,

With girls I talk more about my family I think just because they're generally more interested in that, the more finer parts -- the more detailed parts of your life. I mean guys will usually ask you what you're doing that day or that month or what you're going to do

together in the future but not necessarily where you came from, you know who's the most important person in your life, what are your future plans and girls much more put effort into knowing details about you.

Ralph's felt his female friends care about his personal history, his family, and the significant details of those relationships whereas his male friendships do not typically get beyond the surface level.

Women were strong influencers on the participants. Ralph's grandmother, mother, sister, and older female cousins encouraged him to act like a gentlemen and think about how he treated other women whether they were friends or partners. For John, his high school ex-girlfriend really challenged his perception of having sex. While his male friends constantly talked about getting a girlfriend in order to have sex, his girlfriend questioned this expectation. John talked about how impactful this was and it changed how he thought about relationships and his interactions with women. Figure 4.9 represents the categories participants discussed related to influence of women.

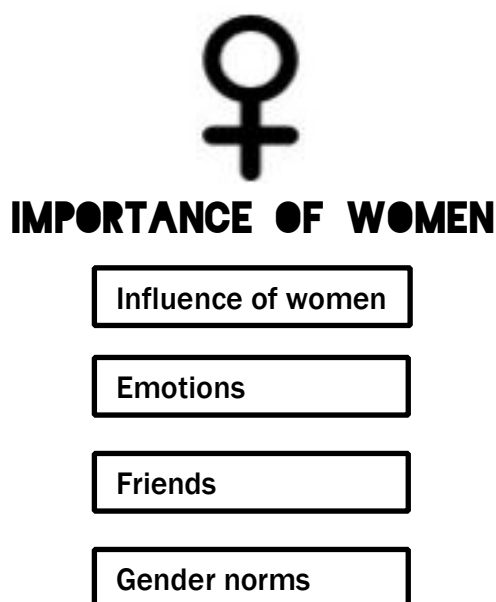


Figure 4.9: Importance of women

Model created by P. D. Badaszewski (2014).

Conclusion

The men in this study shared their thoughts on their own masculinity and how life experiences shaped those considerations. The participants' articulation of masculinity was significantly impacted by gender norms, which led the men to consider particular ways they were supposed to think, feel, and behave. Their conceptualization of masculinity helped to shape the FCMPMD. The factors described in this model show the influence of family, friends, role models, and relationships, but how each factor is impacted by normative gender expectations.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this constructionist grounded theory study was to identify factors that influence positive masculinity development in college men. The experiences articulated by the participants and the meaning they made of them guided the construction of the theoretical model – *Factors of College Men's Positive Masculinity Development* (FCMPMD). Queer theory was used as a theoretical frame to examine college men's experiences with masculinity. This study addressed the following research questions.

1. How do men negotiate their gendered identity as men in college?
2. How do positive and hegemonic masculinity change at the intersections of other identity dimensions?
3. How do college men negotiate, simultaneously resisting and reinforcing, positive and hegemonic masculinity?

Chapter four described the study's findings. Additionally, in chapter four I reviewed participant demographics, described axial coding and relationships among the axial categories, and constructed the FCMPMD. This chapter will discuss the findings, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion of Findings

I examined the factors that influence positive masculinity development in college men using a queer theoretical lens in order to gain a broader understanding of how college men conceptualize their masculinity. I found that personal, societal, and environmental factors played

a part in conceptualizing positive masculinity. Viewed through a queer theoretical lens the men's experiences showed the influence of gender norms and binary constructions on gender development as well as the way men worked against the traditional image of masculinity. Although not a lens for analysis in this study, I remained mindful of the concept of intersectionality throughout data collection and analysis in an attempt to understand how different aspects of participant's identities interacted with their masculinity.

Impact of Gender Norms

The impact of gender norms and gender construction is central to college men's construction of positive masculinity. Normative masculinity made up the sea that positive masculinity and the influencing factors swam in. As participants shared their experiences I could see the overarching influence of gender norms on their lived experiences. Several participants described specific instances where they felt pressured to behave in a particular way or where they were mocked for certain behaviors. For example, John spoke about how he did not connect with his other male peers because he was involved on campus and his peers did not view involvement as a masculine trait. This real or perceived pressure often led to normative masculinity performance (Edwards & Jones, 2009; Harris, 2010; Harris et al., 2011). Ralph described how his behavior changed around his male friends in his freshmen residence hall as well as around his current friends when they attended football games. Ralph described,

Two of my best guy friends, we've gone to every football game together and...I can just be a guy I guess and sit back and drink beer and eat nasty food and watch football and cheer and be rowdy and curse and do all these kind of things is like a -- and talk about women and you know just be completely without reservation or without worry of what

people are going to think about me is a huge relief for me sometimes as a way I can de-stress.

Ralph went so far as to describe not only how he behaves differently at football games, but also how that behavior is different when women are present. When more women are present he shared he does not drink as much, curse as much, or use as many “violent phrases” because he is “trying to be more polite and...trying not to be as offensive.” Gender normative concepts were so ingrained in participant’s learned experience that they were consciously aware of behavioral expectations and how situational context might alter those expectations.

Gender norms also permeated the other factors that emerged from the data. As participants spoke about relationships with friends and family, perceptions of other men and women, and how they developed their own sense of self, they articulated gender normative ideas. John talked about conversations he had with his male friends about sex both in high school and college. In high school these conversations were about the importance of having a girlfriend and the expectation that having a girlfriend ultimately meant having sex. In college these conversations shifted to parties and whether you would take a girl home. John retold a story about how he met a woman he knew downtown. He was interested in her and his friends were pushing him to hook up with her especially when he offered to walk her home.

I don't know like one of my friends was like well you know are you going to hook up with her, and so like I tried to. And I guess that’s because I just felt like it was something I had to do you know.

John shared that he walked the woman home and they made out, but it did not feel right. John did not want to engage in sexual behavior when alcohol was involved. He was more interested in meeting women and having a conversation with them rather than simply hooking up. John’s

personal values were in opposition to gender norms and the pressure he was feeling from his friends. Even though John had different values and made different choices, he still felt pressure from his friends based on masculinity norms and the college hook up culture.

Several participants talked about their personal belief that being a gentleman was important. Ralph shared,

Things about being a gentleman [are] I guess a really big part of manhood to me. And not only protecting you know your partner, your woman, your girlfriend, your whatever, but being able to assure them that everything is alright. Like when my mom told me growing up that I need to stand on the -- like this side of the street or opening doors or paying for meals or at least offering to pay for meals. It's just even that point of making sure that that person is taken care of or at least they feel like they are has been a huge thing.

Ralph articulated his own personal thoughts on being a gentleman, concepts that could be considered masculine stereotypes. At the same time, Ralph also shared how his family and his mom taught him the behaviors he felt were a part of being a gentleman.

Boys are exposed to situations where they are taught appropriate gender normative behaviors and learn what it means to be a man (Farrell, 1974; Pollack, 1998). These learned gender normative behaviors, often considered gender stereotypes, continue to be reinforced as boys become teenagers and young men in college. As participants spoke about their construction of masculinity, and positive masculinity, they described how they learned and often performed in ways that reinforced these behaviors. Simultaneously, as they talked about their own self-concept and individual masculinity, the men shared ways they countered gender norms.

As participants articulated their understanding of normative masculinity and how it impacted them, it was clear how deeply the norms were ingrained in their personality. As

described above, John, a second year, and Ralph, a graduating senior, both struggled in similar ways with normative pressures. Ralph, compared to John, is more self-assured, which came through in his interviews, however through all his self-assurance he is still influenced by gender normative practices. Ralph is able to name these more clearly and reflect on his decision-making, but still struggles with the same normative pressures as John.

Negotiating Masculinity

Participants negotiated their masculinity by developing their own sense of self and their own conceptualization of what masculinity means. Viewed within the FCMPMD, men's individual sense of self and understanding of masculinity develops within the context of normative masculinity and through interaction with positive masculinity and the other factors in the model. For example, participants described how familial traits, behaviors, and life lessons impacted their masculinity. These experiences then interacted with the other factors of the model to form participant's positive masculinity. Subsequently, positive masculinity impacted how participants constructed their sense of self and the ways they consider relationships with people in their lives.

Research on masculinity and gender norms showed that the impact of these learned norms and behaviors appears to be a loss of personal values as men seek to conform (Edwards & Jones, 2009; Kahn et al., 2011; O'Neil & Nadeau, 1999). Men hide their true selves in order to abide by societal rules and expectations. The men in the current study disagreed. It was their own individual sense of self and masculinity along with strong personal values that helped develop an understanding of their own masculinity. It was only by embracing their true selves and overcoming challenges that the men were able to truly understand themselves. Chase shared,

It's those experiences where you're ridiculed for doing what you like because it doesn't fit the norm...I've always been interested in kind of journalism and stuff like that and that isn't -- that doesn't make you popular in high school. I was the editor in chief of the high school newspaper and so like you know that experience really kind of taught me just do what you want to do regardless of how it makes you look.

Chase dealt with a number of challenging situations during high school particularly when he came out. As he came to understand himself he realized that, no matter the ridicule or the expectations, he was happiest when he acted true to his ideals.

Chase was incredibly self-reflective. He was able to articulate his own beliefs with clarity and depth; to some degree with more self-realization than his peers who were closer to degree competition. At the same time, his self-understanding may have lacked true awareness of underlying gender socializations. For example, he described participating in high school sports because he wanted to, not because sports are a traditionally masculine activity. Although I appreciate Chase's desire to push back on normative masculinity, I think this example shows that Chase understands himself, but does not have a comprehensive worldview. I cannot say with complete certainty, but I believe Chase received overt and subtle messages as he grew up that did influence his desire to participate in sports, regardless of his justification of that participation.

Participants described the importance of values in their conceptualization of masculinity. Values contributed to an overall sense of self and, related to their masculinity, an individual sense of masculinity. Although the men recognized learned gender norms, they negotiated their own sense of masculinity by standing up for their own beliefs and embracing traits and values often associated with traditional femininity (Butler, 1990; Marinucci, 2010; Sax, 2008). As men negotiated normative masculinity it was interesting that what they believed was lacking were

traits defined as traditionally feminine. These traits (e.g., care, showing emotion, listening) are viewed as positive for men, but are typically expected of women (Butler, 1990; Marinucci, 2010; Sax, 2008). The men did not discuss how other people reacted to their incorporation of traditionally feminine behaviors. Jim and Chase described college as a place where you can just be yourself, but I regularly witness conversations on campus where students judge other people's behavior. While this could be another example of Jim and Chase failing to recognize the systemic conditions in their environment, I think this is a reflection of their own sense of self and the people in their social circle. My participants authentically described their values and beliefs. These values are core to their identity, which influenced their involvement and how they selected trusted friends.

As participants shared their thoughts about masculinity and their own development I was surprised by their recognition of inherent gender norms and binary constructions of gender. The men described these concepts without prompting. Although their understanding varied, each participant shared examples of how they were influenced by gender norms and times when they did or did not behave congruent with those norms. Conformity to gender norms often occurred in spaces with other men. With other men, participants talked differently about women, were louder, and more physical. Participants were performing for their men peers. Non-normative behavior occurred most frequently with women, close friends, and student organizations. Therefore, recognition of gender norms did not always result in non-normative behavior because the men were pressured to conform and perform based on other men.

Participants also gave numerous examples of binary gender constructions. Ralph outlined specific traits for men and women based on a spectrum, placing himself somewhere in the middle. Yuan described masculinity as a spectrum of "red hot" at one end and "icy cold" at

the other with “lukewarm” in the middle. He did not place himself on this spectrum, but shared his dad was closer to the hot end and his brother was closer to the middle or cold areas. Chase stated that he, “never viewed the world in binary” and did not believe in one definition of masculinity, but then briefly described a spectrum of different types of men. Chase regularly provided a counter-narrative to other participant’s stories and was the most vocally opposed to gender norms; however, even he was impacted by societal gender constructions.

Each participant shared experiences of identifying who they are, who they wanted to be, and what they want to do regardless of what gender norms or their peers might say about those choices. In describing this process participants shared ways they negotiated their own masculinity. They identified normative behavior and attempted to transcend it based on their own values system. Lastly, they pointed out binaries and often how they blended the two opposing ends to form a better man. The participants were attempting to challenge normative concepts, blur identity lines, and break down prescribed definitions of masculinity (Goldman, 1996; Jagose, 1996), all hallmarks of queer theory, which contests gender constructions, power dynamics, and closed identity categories. Although participants described this blending process as putting them somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, from a queer theoretical perspective, I would argue it actually removes them from the spectrum altogether. Since queer theory seeks to create open, non-binary categories (Seidman, 1996; Tierney, 1997) I think the participant’s individual sense of self and masculinity, and therefore the FCMPMD, operates beyond the binary.

Masculinity at the Intersections

In addition to adapting to gender norms and negotiating their masculinity, several participants spoke about navigating other aspects of their identity and their masculinity

simultaneously. Intersectionality considers the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of identity formations (McCall, 2005). Additionally, it provides a framework for analyzing how people manage the interaction of their identities and how social inequalities impact the experiences of people who occupy multiple, intersecting identities (Strayhorn, 2013). As we discussed how other aspects of their identity connected with their masculinity, participants from dominant backgrounds struggled to think about these intersections. Chipper commented that as a white man he often does not need to think about his background and how that impacts him. Richard was also unable to articulate privileges associated with his dominant identities and did not articulate connections or intersections between his dominant identities. This is not uncommon. People from dominant backgrounds may have lower identity salience, which relates to the power and privilege inherent in those identities (Abes et al., 2007; Banks, Pliner, & Hopkins, 2013; Jones & McEwen, 2000; Torres, Jones, & Renn, 2009).

Students from underrepresented backgrounds had different experiences related to identity construction and the intersections of their identities. John described his struggle with identifying as both Latino and White. He spoke about not fitting into either group as he was growing up.

I don't speak Spanish but so I can't actually be in like my dad's community, like the Hispanic community, but my name is a Spanish name. I don't really fit in in like the White community or anything like that. So all this time growing up I've always had that little mixture of like okay, like here's two groups of friends and I go hang out with my friends who are Hispanic and I go hang out with my friends who are White but I don't ever actually fit in all the way with either one of them.

John's identity salience was constantly in the forefront of his mind. As he shifted between groups different aspects of his identity moved closer to his core sense of self (Abes et al., 2007;

Jones & McEwen, 2000). John's example shows applicability of queer theory beyond gender and sexuality. John was not Hispanic enough and he was not White enough. John was not "enough" based on a binary construction of his racial/ethnic identity. Queer theory offers a lens to deconstruct binary conceptualizations, however these ideas will persist as long as society constructs norms in this way.

Mark described how being Black and male was both positive and negative. As discussed in chapter four, Mark was often the only Black person in his organizations and classes. This was often challenging, particularly during class discussions where he felt he was speaking on behalf of all Black people or all Black men. Additionally, he shared "it was always tough to like associate myself with black men on campus just because of like stereotypes" related to behavior and connection with athletics. Conversely, Mark commented that there were some positives with being one of few Black men on campus, particularly an involved Black man. Mark shared,

I applied to be an orientation leader and I didn't get it but in my mind there was like 100 or 200 people applying, I was like I'm not in competition with 200 people, I'm in competition with like five other black males because they have to have one on their board, so I felt like even within taking out all the women and then within that taking out all of the white males or any other race and going straight for the black males, then I feel like I'm only in competition with them.

As Mark consider his identities as Black and male he articulated times when he embraced and distanced himself from those identities. At times being a Black man was central to Mark's sense of self and at other times it was distant. He struggled with stereotypes related to Black men and people ignoring the uniqueness of individuals while also benefiting from the desire to have diverse representation of students within organizations and student leadership positions on

campus (Dill & Zambrana, 2009). Mark's story points to the systemic issues at SRU and at many other predominantly White institutions. As a practitioner I know that student leaders and incoming students benefit from having a diverse orientation leader staff, however what does it say to students that we have a diversity quota within such a high-profile leadership position? We might represent the statistical profile of SRU by having a certain number of students from diverse backgrounds on an orientation leader staff, but we are also sending certain messages to those students.

Chase and Yuan both described the interconnection of their masculinity and sexual orientation, but each had their own unique experience. For Chase being gay was central to his identity. He "loves being gay" and knew at a young age that he was gay. Although his sexual orientation is central to his identity, his masculinity and any connection between the two is not. Chase articulated that the choices he makes relate to being a good person and not a good man. Chase acknowledges his gay identity, but actively rejects the concept of masculinity even though he identifies as male and a gay male. At the same time, Chase was not able to articulate any privileges associated with being a college man. He acknowledged that attending college and having parents who support him financially were privileges, but felt that those privileges were not connected to his male-ness.

Yuan described his sexual orientation as being central to his identity, but in a different way than Chase. As he described his sexual orientation he talked more about difficulties he had with stereotypical gay men and how he was more comfortable with straight men. Yuan described gay men as "weak" and "fragile" and that in a fight he could "break them." Yuan was not a violent person, but was troubled by the stereotypical behavior of some of his gay peers and the perception of weakness. He appeared to be more interested in tough men who were not

“dramatic” or “finicky.” This led Yuan to have stronger connections with straight men even though those relationships would not lead to romantic connections. These relationships were more “laid back” and “less dramatic.” These feelings about gay and straight men intersect with Yuan’s gender performance. These feelings also reinforce a large number of gender stereotypes for both gay and straight men. The gay men he described are weak and feminine and the straight men laid back and masculine. The straight men eat a lot and taught him it was okay to belch loudly in public. The latter traits are those that he embodies when he gets to college. I acknowledge that Yuan’s feelings are his feelings, but he does not have a complete understanding of societal stereotypes and how they are constructed. He not only described gay and straight men according to stereotypes, but also acted in those stereotypical ways.

In high school, Yuan described his behavior as more flamboyant. When he came out he stated there was “an explosion of glitter.” During college he has become more “masculine.” Yuan attributed this change to the “pressure of being the token [gay man].” He felt that the expectations of being out and proud as a gay man would be too much pressure so he chose to better blend his overall sexual identity and gender construction. Based on the Cass (1979) and D’Augelli (1994) models of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) development, Yuan is developing his gay identity in an unusual way. His initial flamboyance included involvement in social justice issues facing gay people, such as gay marriage. In Cass’s model this is the final stage of development and even in D’Augelli’s model, which is not linear, participating actively in the gay community often comes later in the development process once a person has worked through the internal aspects of their sexual identity. As Yuan began at SRU and became more “masculine” he conforms to the societal pressures related to gender and sexuality. Acknowledging how your gay identity makes you different from those who are straight is often the first step in

acknowledging your sexual identity. The interconnectedness of Yuan's gender and sexual orientation are competing and causing him to essentially develop in reverse. His flamboyant behavior when he came out reinforced stereotypes of gay men and therefore his behavior was not viewed as masculine. His shift to a more "blended" identity balanced his sexuality and masculinity, which may be the intersection of his gender, sexuality, and race/ethnicity. At the same time, this "blended" identity combines some stereotypical ideals of gay and straight men.

As Yuan defined his self of sense he had a strong connection to being Chinese. Being a Chinese man meant being the provider and supporting a family. There was an assumption that Chinese men would marry women, carry on the family name, and become successful in a professional career. These expectations represent traditional hegemonic ideals; however, Yuan's thoughts on gay men and his initial behavior when he came out do not. He does not attribute his change from flamboyant to masculine to his Chinese identity, but as he considers his parent's expectations and their reaction when he does come out to them, there appears to be an intersection of these three aspects of his overall identity.

Intersectionality seeks to deconstruct power dynamics and social inequality (Dill & Zambrana, 2009; Jones & Abes, 2013; Strayhorn, 2013). As participants talked about their different identities and the connection or lack of connection to their masculinity, it became clear that variations existed between individual men and different identity groups. Each participant's experience with identity construction was unique based on their identities and their own life experience. In considering the development of one aspect of identity, in this study masculinity, it is important to be mindful of how people make meaning of each identity category relative to all others.

Positive Masculinity

This study viewed positive masculinity as “men breaking through gender norms to embrace an individual sense of self, a comfort in their own skin and a desire to help other people” (Badaszewski et al., 2013, p. 23). Findings from this study, based on the experiences of the participants, support this definition but with some alteration. As the men described their experiences with masculinity they shared the importance of other people in their own development. These experiences included positive and negative relationships with family members, close friends, and women. In addition, the men described the importance of knowing themselves, understanding how they conceptualized masculinity, and expressing a fuller range of emotions.

The men in this study, except Chase, were working toward the “pinnacle of masculinity” as Richard described it; meaning they were seeking to continuously develop as men to ultimately construct their full, complete masculine selves. This journey connects to the concepts of possible selves and possible masculinity. Possible selves focuses on what men want to become in the future as well as their fears of what they might become (Davies et al., 2010). “Possible masculinity encompasses what men need to become healthy, responsible, tolerant, civil, and nurturing in their families and communities...[and] includes those attitudes, characteristics, behaviors, skills, and coping strategies that are required for men to lead positive, healthy lives” (Davies et al., 2010, p. 348). The participants described these two concepts through their experiences. As the men talked about their continued development and achieving a higher level of masculinity, they were describing a possible self. And as they described their family, friends, and role models they were describing some of the support structures they need in order to have positive lives.

The men came to recognize gender norms, the impact of gender norms on their development, and how they could live within the normative concepts. This meant the men behaved in ways an outsider might consider both gender normative and non-gender normative. In this way, men were attempting to live up to traditional hegemonic definitions of masculinity, while at other times attempting to break free from those stereotypes. It is important to note that when the participants behaved in stereotypically hegemonic ways, it was not necessarily a negative experience. In fact, some behaviors might be considered positive. For example, Ralph wanted to provide for his family and friends and consciously walked on the street side of the sidewalk when he was with women. Although these behaviors reinforce hegemonic conceptualizations of masculinity and patriarchy, the ideas of providing for and caring for other people are inherently positive as well. Therefore, based on these findings, I am not attempting to describe hegemonic masculinity as inherently negative nor I am attempting to define positive masculinity as the polar opposite of hegemonic masculinity.

Based on the findings from this study, I postulate that positive masculinity exists outside the binary. While the traditional societal conceptualization of masculinity is closer to that of dominant hegemonic masculinity (R. W. Connell, 2001, 2005; R. W. Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), the men in this study conveyed a range of conceptualizations. They described hegemonic behaviors, traditionally feminine behaviors, and behaviors that I believe exist outside the binary. The traditionally hegemonic behaviors were not automatically negative and the traditionally feminine and non-binary were not automatically positive, even though those behaviors are often those society might consider positive. For example, Ralph shared that he tries to connect with a woman on a more emotional level when he first interacts with her. While this might be seen as a good quality, Ralph had mixed feelings. He genuinely wanted to have a meaningful connection

with women, but was often perceived to be leading women on when he decided he was not truly interested in a romantic relationship. Based on these findings, I offer that positive masculinity is an open, non-binary category where men understand and challenge gender norms and develop their own healthy sense of self and masculinity with the support of significant people in their lives.

Relationship to Development

The purpose of this study was to explore positive masculinity development in college men; however, masculinity development does not occur in isolation, but alongside psychosocial, cognitive, moral, and identity development. As the men in this study described their life experiences and their understanding of masculinity, they were also providing insight into other developmental processes.

Similar to their individual developmental journeys related to masculinity, participants had their own overall developmental journeys. As Richard, a sophomore, spoke, it was clear that he was largely following external formulas and shifting between absolute and transitional knowing (Baxter Magolda, 2001). Richard's thoughts about masculinity were still mostly normative, the most normative of all of the participants. He did not want to lose to women in cross country running competitions and wanted to act like a gentleman in a traditionally normative way. These normative scripts were internalized from the environment without Richard considering his own personal views on the messages he received. On the other hand, John, also a sophomore, was a transitional knower and in the crossroads phase of Baxter Magolda's (2001) model. John still felt external pressures, his friends pushing him to hook up with a woman, but was able to make a conscious decision based on his beliefs and values to not hook up with the woman.

Age and year in college did not always correlate with progression along student development models. As mentioned above, John appears more highly developed as a sophomore than Richard. Chase and Yuan are both young for traditionally-aged juniors, however both talked about their life and coming out processes in ways I could tell had a significant influence on their development. Chase had a strong sense of identity and autonomy (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Of all eight participants, Chase could most clearly describe his beliefs and values and his rationale for both. Conversely, Chase might lack a true understanding of environmental influences on his development. Considering Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological approach Chase's micro- and meso-systems are congruent with his personal beliefs and his understanding of self, however Chase cannot fully recognize the impact of exosystem interactions. For example, Chase does not ascribe to a gender binary and felt that his participation in sports was solely because he enjoyed sports. I offer that Chase may not be able to recognize the inherent gender socialization in the environment.

Yuan has a highly developed sense of purpose and independence (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). This stems from when his parents left him in the U.S. as a sixteen year-old unaccompanied minor. Yuan was able to live with a friend, but had to get a job to support himself and manage things often left to parents. Yet, Yuan continues to hold some stereotypical beliefs related to how gay and straight men behave. His initial pride in being gay has been replaced with traditionally normative masculine behaviors, such as belching loudly and avoiding appearances of weakness. Having a more balanced gender/sexual identity is not inherently negative (although belching in public is bad manners), but Yuan's rationale for shifting his behavior was based on gender norms, not wanting to be a token gay man who is weak and "one of the girls." Yuan's desire to fuse stereotypically gay and straight behaviors and expectations is

synonymous with third order thinking (Kegan, 1994). As Yuan rationalized his decisions based on “others” feelings and expectations he did so without truly considering his own internal rationale.

Chipper and Ralph were two older participants, which was clear in how they talked about adhering to their own personal beliefs regardless of how other people felt. Chipper focused on his personal “brand” and how his decisions could impact that brand. Ralph had a strong understanding of his purpose and how his involvement was congruent with his personal values. However, Chipper’s brand did not include true recognition of his privilege as a white man. He stated that he knew he had privilege, but could not articulate how he benefited from those privileges. Although I acknowledge Chipper’s recognition of privilege, I wonder if he is repeating a message that he heard through his involvement on campus rather than something he honestly believes. If he truly understood the impact of his privilege he would be able to identify specific benefits (Case, 2013). Ralph’s incongruence stems from his behavior at football games depending on who is present. Ralph drinks more heavily and swears more when only his male friends are present, but tones it down when women are around. I appreciate Ralph’s considerate behavior, but he is looking to others for approval and lacks consistency in his identity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

The men in this study showed a strong understanding of gender norms and described how their own individualism contributed to their sense of masculinity. While the men developed their sense of masculinity they also developed cognitively, socially, and morally. Their stories showed that individual experiences impact developmental journeys, progression in one area does not automatically mean progression in another, and development is a non-linear process fraught with steps forward and backward.

Masculinity and the Model

As discussed, the men in this study constructed their definitions of masculinity based on their own personal experience. The FCMPMD was constructed to reflect how the participants described their construction of masculinity, and, in this study, positive masculinity. Normative masculinity became the overarching component of the model because participants constructed masculinity through constant consideration of gender norms. The men thought about how their interactions with others, their relationships with others, and their individual behavior was or was not considered traditionally masculine. In this way, the men were consciously and unconsciously aware of binary constructions of gender. Often when the men described non-normative behaviors, they were describing behaviors society would consider feminine. For most of the participants, much of their behavior was considered either traditionally masculine or traditionally feminine. The queer theoretical lens employed in this study helped to deconstruct the binary through positive masculinity.

The other factors in the FCMPMD each contributed to the men's construction of positive masculinity. Additionally, all of the factors except for role models were influenced by positive masculinity. Even though the factors are depicted individually there is overlap between the factors and overlap in how the factors impacted positive masculinity. For example, participants' development of self, which included their individual definitions of masculinity, was influenced by all of the other factors in the model. As the participants discussed being more emotional and honest with their feelings, they described the impact of family members and women on those ideals. Perceptions of other men were often based on past and present life events and viewed through personal values and beliefs. For example, Ralph was taught to respect and care for women beyond simple physical attraction. These life events/lessons influenced his values,

beliefs, and how he viewed male peers who sought relationships with women solely for casual sex.

Overall, the model provides a visual representation for the complex construction of positive masculinity. No one factor solely contributes to positive masculinity, but all are impacted by societal constructions of normative masculinity. Introducing a queer theoretical perspective allowed me to view participants' stories and positive masculinity outside the traditional binary view. The participants understood the gender binary because most felt they fell in the middle of the masculine-feminine behavioral spectrum. I think queer theory concludes that their individual sense of masculinity, and positive masculinity, are not part of the binary at all. The men's individual life events, relationships with family and friends, and development of self and masculinity based on those factors, provide an individualized sense of positive masculinity.

Importance of the Model

The FCMPMD supports findings from previous research (Badaszewski et al., 2013; Davis, 2002; Edwards & Jones, 2009; Harris, 2010; Harris & Harper, 2012) and provides new insights related to college men's development. The men in this study continued to describe the importance of family, role models, and peers (Badaszewski et al., 2013; Davis, 2002; Edwards & Jones, 2009; S. R. Harper et al., 2005). Family members and peers, particularly male peers, were both positive and negative examples for the men in this study. Dad was sometimes described negatively with only a few traits being mentioned as something the participants wanted to emulate. The men often described dad, other male family members, and male peers as being closed off emotionally and expressing only anger as an emotion (O'Neil, 1981, 2008).

Conversely, relationships with women, both peer and familial, provided important positive connections for the men. Relationships with women provided safe environments for the men to share their feelings and vulnerabilities. Women also offered insights into ways to be better men. Mark's mother taught him how to remain positive even in the face of adversity. Ralph learned from his mother and sister the importance of helping other people. Participants also shared that they were able to be more open with their female friends. Women were more in touch with their emotions and were better able to support men when they shared their emotions. Previous research has not explored how friendships with women impact men. Way (2011) described boy's friendships during elementary and high school, but, based on this study, there is an important relationship between women and men during college. Just as more men need to work to eradicate sexual violence, women could be integrated into programmatic interventions for men. Including women in programmatic efforts could help to break down the barriers men may have when sharing emotions around other men.

Although some of the participants described family members as role models, the overwhelming sentiment was that specific role models did not exist in their immediate lives. This finding differs from the previous pilot study (Badaszewski et al., 2013). The men described traits integrated from family members, peers, and others that they used to shape their identities. In fact, celebrities and characters in movies were mentioned just as often as specific people in their immediate lives. Although research has shown that media and sports influence men's concept of masculinity (S. R. Harper et al., 2005; Hollander et al., 2011), the specificity of the men's examples in this study warrants further consideration. Davis (2002), Edwards and Jones (2009), and S. R. Harper (2012) each described how men's involvement often led to formal and informal mentoring relationships with staff and faculty connected to programs and organizations.

Mark shared that he connected with his supervisor in the Visitor Center and Richard felt supported by his hall director, but neither man turned to these staff members to support their masculinity. In addition, they did not describe them as role models. Outside of Mark and Richard, the men did not describe advisors or supervisors as role models or mention incorporating any of their traits. As practitioners we often assume that involvement leads to an automatic connection between the staff advisor/supervisor and the student. That is not the case. If student affairs staff truly want to become role models for students they not only need to role model appropriate behavior, but they also need to actively reach out to develop those meaningful connections.

As men experienced life they were bombarded by gender normative images and ideals. These normative ideals influenced how the men in this study considered masculinity and how they worked to develop their own sense of self and sense of masculinity. The participants shared that men often express only anger and aggression, focus on physicality, and seek to drink alcohol and to engage in non-romantic sexual relationships with women. As men developed their own sense of masculinity they were able to specifically articulate the normative concepts that have influenced them. They critiqued their own behavior and how it changed when they were around men versus women. Often their behavior around other men involved performing traditionally masculine behaviors (Edwards & Jones, 2009; Harris, 2010). As each man developed, he began to recognize this performativity and consider who he truly wanted to be. This process involved considering traits and values learned and observed from others, becoming more in touch with their emotions, and acknowledging their own feelings and beliefs about masculinity. Badaszewski et al. (2013) found that self was a key aspect of positive masculinity and this study further supports that importance. Additionally, the findings from this study show that college

men are aware of masculine gender norms and work to counter some of them as they develop their own identity. Finally, even when the men in this study acted in gender normative ways it typically was not negative. In this model, positive masculinity is not the opposite of hegemonic masculinity. Positive masculinity operates as an open category where men consider who they are and how they conceptualize their individual sense of masculinity.

Overall, the FCMPMD expands on previous of research and offers new insights into college men's identity development. As researchers continue to study college men it is important to consider the importance of their relationships with women and how women support men's understanding of emotions. Furthermore, researchers should explore men's understanding of gender norms and how men work to overcome those pressures to develop an overall sense of self. Finally, practitioners need to consider the multiple influences on college men. Just because men are a dominant identity group does not mean that they do not have a challenging development journey. As practitioners work with college men they need to consider how to best support them while balancing the needs of historically oppressed populations and the intersecting identities of men. Additionally, as practitioners consider mentoring relationships they must be mindful that those relationships do not develop simply from men's involvement in organizations or leadership positions. Practitioners should consider ways they can, over time, foster meaningful relationships with men to truly aid in their development.

Limitations

This study was conducted at Southeastern Research University, a predominately White, flagship university in the southeastern United States. Since this study asked participants to reflect on their personal college stories, their specific experiences related to institutional culture may vary on different campuses and in different regions of the United States. Although the

participant sample was diverse with respect to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and family background, the FCMPMD was created based on the specific experiences of these eight participants and cannot be directly generalized.

Implications for Practice

The impetus for this study was the negative behaviors of college men and a call to explore whether positive masculinity exists (Harper & Harris, 2010). The emerging theory offers new insights into both positive masculinity and contributors to positive masculinity. The theory provides insights, implications, and areas where student affairs practitioners could better support men's development.

First, the emerging theory shows the participants' clear awareness of societal gender norms and binary gender constructions, which can be useful in designing programmatic interventions. Men need the opportunity to consider who they are as individuals outside the bounds of gendered norms (O'Neil, 1981, 1990, 2008). The college men in this study articulated normative concepts and learned behaviors expected of them as men. This awareness provides an opportunity for practitioners to design programmatic opportunities for men and women to discuss their understanding of these norms and ways they can work with staff and other students to explore concepts of masculinity. Since men are a dominant identity group it may be difficult to connect a social justice focus to programmatic interventions for men. However, targeting this identity group provides numerous meaningful connections. From a social justice perspective opportunities to discuss gender norms would allow men (and women) to consider ways to address intolerant and stereotypical behavior by men towards others and others towards men, to address issues of men's power and privilege, and to provide strategies for men to do something about these issues.

Second, practitioners need to reach out to college men more directly. Participants did not consider their gender identity, but were looking for opportunities to talk about what it means to be a man in general and in college. When asked how SRU supported their development as men the majority participants did not mention specific campus offices or staff. As SRU considered diversity programs they focused primarily on race, which can likely be attributed to the institution's regional location. It is important for institutions to focus on gender issues on campus and, when doing so, to create conversations around men and masculinity. Practitioners could also reach out to men through formal or informal mentoring relationships. As staff members work with men through student leadership positions or even through conduct meetings, they have ability to form relationships and inquire about how they are developing all aspects of their identity, including their masculinity. Men are not fully developed simply because they are men or are from dominant identities. Practitioners do need to take caution in their work with men. Men may not be the majority on campus or the majority in student organizations, but they are often still inherently privileged on campus. As we work with men and encourage their increased involvement, we must continue to focus on women and other underrepresented populations. Increased focused on programs and services for men should not come at the detriment of other student populations.

Third, men described the importance of discussing their emotions. The men in this study felt most comfortable being vulnerable with women, both family and friends. However, the men also felt that their male peers need to embrace their emotions beyond anger and aggression. Practitioners need to consider opportunities to create space for men to openly share their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. These opportunities should be offered over a continuous time period so that true relationships can be formed, creating a greater likelihood for honesty and

vulnerability. Additionally, based on the experiences of the men in this study encouraging women's participation in these programs may allow men to speak more openly.

Fourth, practitioners should consider creating a needs assessment (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996) to specifically understand the needs of men on their campus. This needs assessment could provide institutional leaders with information on how best to structure programs and services to serve the men on campus. The assessment could include both quantitative and qualitative components. A needs assessment could be a beneficial way to hear about men's experiences on campus, to learn how men are or are not currently supported, and to gather information of men who are interested in assisting staff with the development of new programs.

Fifth, practitioners should develop collaborative programs inside and outside of student affairs. In order to consider intersecting identities of college men and situations that could impact the full campus community, practitioners need to think about campus partnerships. Developing a programmatic partnership with Athletics and/or Greek Life could help counter cultures that are known to devalue women and reinforce negative hegemonic masculinity. Working with sexual violence prevention and the wellness center would allow for targeted programs on sexual violence, bystander intervention, and alcohol and drug use. These collaborative programs provide an opportunity to address gender socialization throughout a campus community. By creating a campus-wide response shows men that they are supported throughout the institution.

Finally, practitioners need to recognize men as individuals just as with all other identity groups and student populations. The participants in this study spoke about their own personal development as men and how many different men are part of the SRU community. Just as there is no singular experience for people from a particular racial or ethnic background, there is no one

type of man. Practitioners should approach men as individuals and remember negative (and positive) behavior of one man does not speak to the behavior of all men. Therefore, no program or service will automatically support every man on campus. It is important for practitioners to take a varied approach to working with college men and remain mindful of the numerous identities that form each individual man.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study outlined factors that influence positive masculinity development in college men and showed that those factors can be conceptualized into a theoretical model. The experiences of the eight men in this study provide groundwork for future research. Although participants came from diverse backgrounds, it was not possible to account for the full range of diverse characteristics with eight participants. Taking into account other identity aspects (e.g., religion, SES) could provide new insights to consider. In addition, factors influencing positive masculinity should be explored in different institutional contexts and at institutions outside of the Southeast.

There are a number of possibilities to further explore the factors from this study. These factors could be explored with targeted student populations, such as specific identity groups, students involved in campus student organizations or athletics, or from particular majors. Each specific study could provide clarity to the current factors, evidence for the addition of new factors, or evidence for the removal of others. Future studies could utilize different theoretical frameworks (e.g., feminist, phenomenology) and data collection methods (e.g., focus groups, photo elicitation, surveys) to move beyond the semi-structured interviews.

Men's awareness of gender norms and binary constructions of gender was an unexpected finding. The men not only articulated these concepts, but provided examples of how their own

behavior did and did not conform. Future studies should explore this concept. Men were able to name these concepts, but when did they come to understand them and how? As participants in this study described gender norms they did mention family members and media, but did not specifically connect their understanding of gender norms to those people. Although gender norms are a factor of the FCMPMD, an additional study exploring men's awareness of norms and binaries could provide insight into how faculty and practitioners might work to capitalize on this awareness through in and out of class opportunities.

Future studies should further investigate intersectionality and masculinity. Whereas participants from dominant identities struggled to articulate how their masculinity intersected with other identities, participants who held at least one non-dominant identity status provided unique insights into how their masculinity and their race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation intersected. As discussed above, the eight men in this study did not encompass all possible diverse characteristics. Additionally, institutional and regional aspects could impact participant's experiences, which could influence their understanding and conceptualization of masculinity. Future research should consider other identity characteristics and further interrogate how intersectionality influences masculinity development.

Lastly, researchers should test the model developed in this study by replicating the methods used in this study, and considering different methods and frameworks described earlier in this section. Further testing of the model in conjunction with other research on college men should be used as stepping-stones for the creation of a model to explain college men's masculinity development. As more and more research explores the various developmental experiences of college men it is imperative that studies look in depth at men's experiences and how their developmental journeys occur. Focusing on these developmental experiences and

creating a theory to explain college men's development could provide new information for student affairs faculty and practitioners as they continue to support, research, and develop program to assist men and women.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the findings and emerging theory in this study related to the research questions, the existing literature on college men's masculinity development, the implications for student affairs practice, and areas for future research. Overall, the *Factors of College Men's Positive Masculinity Development* provides a means to conceptualize positive masculinity development in college men, and consider some of the factors influencing that developmental process.

The college men in this study engaged in a process whereby they developed their own sense of self and individual masculine identity all while being influenced by societal gender norms, family, friends, and other men. This process also involved the men, to some degree, pushing back on or influencing those same factors. Each man had his own individual experience with masculinity development and shared his own successes and challenges with that continued process. This process often involved critical people and events helping men to further understand their own masculinity.

I began this study with the goal of better understanding how college men develop in more positive ways. The stories and experiences of these eight men not only led to the creation of the FCMPMD, but also provided them an opportunity to consider their own masculinity development, and for me to consider mine. These eight men shared that they had never truly considered their development as men and appreciated at least this opportunity to do so. I am thankful that this study provided that possibility for them and for me.

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APPENDIX A
RECRUITMENT E-MAIL

Dear Colleague,

My name is Phil Badaszewski and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services at the University of Georgia. I am currently conducting a research project for my dissertation under the direction of Dr. Merrily Dunn and I would like to request your assistance in identifying potential participants for my study.

I am studying college men (ages 18-24) who have sophomore status or higher. ***The purpose of the study is to create a conceptual model of positive masculinity development.*** All of you work directly with students so I am asking that you make announcements in your classes/organization meetings or send this email along via a listserv that you maintain. Interested students can contact me directly at 716-553-8812.

Interested students will receive a phone call to outline the participant criteria and to provide information regarding the time commitment involved. In general, if a student chooses to become part of the study he will be asked to participate in two audiotaped interviews that will last approximately 30-60 minutes each. The meeting will be held at a mutually agreed upon location. During the interview, we will discuss various aspects of their development as men.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and the student can withdraw from the study at any time. Participation in the study will also remain confidential. While the results may be published, the identity of the student will be protected.

Should you or your students have questions about this study please contact Phil Badaszewski at 716-553-8812 or pbadasze@uga.edu or Dr. Merrily Dunn at 706-542-3927 or merrily@uga.edu

Please ask interested students to contact me via phone as soon as possible. I will then discuss their interest in the study and confirm that they meet the inclusion criteria.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Phil Badaszewski
Department of Counseling and Human Development Services
716-553-8812 – pbadasze@uga.edu

Investigator: Dr. Merrily Dunn, Ph.D.
706-542-3927 – merrily@uga.edu

APPENDIX B CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to take part in a research study titled *“Becoming Better Men: A Conceptual Model of College Men’s Positive Masculinity Development,”* which is being conducted by Philip Badaszewski from the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services in the University of Georgia’s College of Education under the direction of Dr. Merrily Dunn, from the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services in the University of Georgia’s College of Education (706-542-3927). My participation is voluntary; I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have information that can be identified as mine returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

This research study is about how men develop a positive masculine identity. The goal is to create a model to explain the development of college men’s positive masculinity. If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to:

- *Meet individually with the researcher for two 30-60 minutes interviews. During the interviews I will be asked:*
 - *Questions related to my development as man, and*
 - *Questions related to my experiences during college.*
- *Review my interview transcripts for accuracy or clarification; however, I may waive my opportunity to do so.*
- *Potentially respond to follow-up questions that may arise as the researcher conducts the study.*
- *Review a draft of the research findings and provide feedback; however, I may waive my opportunity to do so.*

I understand that the total estimated duration of my participation in this study will range between 60 minutes to 3 hours depending on length of interviews and any follow-up.

I will not benefit directly from this research outside of the opportunity to reflect on the relationship between my masculinity and my development. The findings of this research may lead to educators having a greater awareness and understanding of the experiences of college men and how to best support them during their developmental process in college.

No more than minimal risks are anticipated through participation in this study. As a result of participation, I may come to a greater sense of self-understanding or awareness through the reflective process inherent in interviewing. Discoveries of this nature may be healing or painful. The potential for revealing painful discoveries is expected to rarely—if ever—occur, and the degree of discomfort is expected to be minimal given the nature of the questions. Should a question cause discomfort or you are not willing to answer, you are welcome to skip a question at any time. *In the event that I experience emotions that may need to be further discussed with a professional, I will be directed to the University of Georgia’s Counseling and Psychiatric Services (706-542-2273).*

Additionally, because of the nature of the Internet communication confidentiality cannot be ensured when e-mail or other modes of communication are used. For this reason, you have the option of communicating in this study completely through phone or face-to-face. Any information received via Internet communication or other forms of collected data will be stored on a password-protected computer or a locked cabinet only accessible by the researcher.

The only people who will know that I am a research subject are members of the research team. No individually-identifiable information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others, without my written permission unless required by law. I will be given the opportunity to create a pseudonym for the purposes of data collection and corresponding research reports. The pseudonym code will be maintained in a password protected electronic document in the researcher's computer files and will be destroyed after the final report has been written, which will be no later than December 31, 2014. Pseudonyms will be used during all audio recording and when discussing data with interested parties. All audio recordings will be destroyed once interviews have been transcribed.

Should you have further questions about this study, now or during the course of the project, please contact Phil Badaszewski at (716) 553-8812 or Dr. Merrily Dunn at 706-542-3927 or merrily@uga.edu

My initials below indicate whether or not I give permission to be audio recorded during interviews. My signature below indicates that the researcher has answered all of my questions to my satisfaction and that I consent to volunteer for this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____ *I **DO** give permission to have my interview audio recorded.*

_____ *I **DO NOT** give permission to have my interview audio recorded.*

Dr. Merrily Dunn

Name of Principal Investigator

Telephone: (706) 542-3927

Signature

Email: merrily@uga.edu

Date

Philip Badaszewski

Name of Co-Investigator

Telephone: 716-553-8812

Signature

Email: pbadasze@uga.edu

Date

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX C QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the following background questionnaire. All information provided will remain confidential as outlined in the consent form.

Selected pseudonym: _____

Hometown: _____

Age: _____

Year in college: _____

Major/Intended major: _____

Race: _____

Sexual Orientation:

____ Heterosexual

____ Homosexual

____ Bisexual

____ Other: _____

Family status:

____ Single parent home (mother)

____ Single parent home (father)

____ Two parent family

____ Parents divorced

____ Blended family

Family make-up:

____ Only child

____ Brothers. How many? ____

____ Sisters. How many? ____

____ Step-brothers. How many? ____

____ Step-sisters. How many? ____

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

Hi. My name is Phil and I am a doctoral candidate in the College Student Affairs Administration program at the University of Georgia. I am conducting a research project on masculinity development in college men. Specifically, I want to learn more about how you have developed positive conceptualizations regarding your masculinity. I appreciate you meeting with me today to talk more about that.

Before we begin the interview, I would like to remind you that the information you share during the interview will be kept confidential as explained in the consent form. I will not use your name or any other identifying information about you that might allow someone to figure out who you are. Feel free to skip any questions you do not want to answer and at any time you may end the interview. I anticipate that the interview will take approximately 30 to 60 minutes. Though I will be asking you questions, if at any time you have questions throughout the interview, please feel free to ask. At this point, do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Interview One

- Tell me about yourself
- How would you define what it means to be a man?
 - What kinds of things or people influenced this definition?
 - What kinds of things or people influenced your understanding of what it means to be a man?
 - Tell me about a positive role-model? A negative one?
- Describe yourself as a man
 - How does your description of yourself relate to your definition?
 - How do you see yourself in relation to other men?
- Discuss your other identities (reference questionnaire if needed).
 - How do your other identities relate to your identity as a man?
 - Tell me a story about when the intersection of _____ and masculinity made a difference.
- How have your thoughts on what it means to be a man changed over time?
 - Who or what impacted/influenced that change?
 - Has it changed during your time in college? How? Why?
- Tell me about a time you acted counter to stereotypical male behavior. How about a time you reinforced stereotypical male behavior?
 - How did you feel about this?
 - What kind of conflict, if any, did you experience?
- How has being a man influenced your college experience?
 - Has it impact any of the choices you made in college (e.g. friends, major, involvement, etc.)? Do you think your maleness has afforded you a privileges? Prohibited you in any way?
- How has your definition of masculinity changed as a result of these college experiences?

Interview Two

Interview two will begin with follow up questions from the first interview and then address the following questions.

- What has been the best part of being a man in college?
- What has been the worst part of being a man in college?
- How do your other identities influence your best and worst experiences as a man in college?
- Do you have any role models for what it means for you to be a man?
 - If yes, describe. What have they taught you?
 - If no, what attributes would you look for in a role model?
- Tell me about a time you were proud to be a man in college.
- Tell me about a time you were ashamed to be a man in college.
- How would you describe your development as man during college thus far?
- How are you supported as a man at UGA?
- Have you ever thought much about this topic before this interview? When? Why?
- Have you learned anything about yourself as a result of our conversations? If so, what?

As this is the end of the interview I wanted to give you an opportunity to share anything that you have not already shared. Is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you so much for sharing your experiences with me. I appreciated your insights and the time that you spent with me today. If I have follow-up questions can I contact you?