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Examining Intergroup Relationships Between Black and Latino Males at a 4-Year Public University

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This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the Committee listed below, which hereby approves the manuscript of Matthew Smith as fulfilling the scope and quality requirements for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education.

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Abstract

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Heightened competition between racial groups, coupled with negative perceptions of one another, has led to increased conflict between people of color in urban communities. Often at the center of conflicts are men of color. Despite vast research studying experiences of men of color, very little research has explored how men of color build relationships across racial differences. This study examines how Black and Latino males in a Male of Color Initiative (MCI) at a public 4-year university developed intergroup relationships across racial differences. This study used a phenomenological approach consisting of in-depth interviews with current and former participants in MCIs. The findings revealed that many of the participants were socialized to fear and distrust outgroup males. As a result, the majority of participants did not have meaningful relationships with outgroup males.

Additionally, evidence suggested that the MCI helped develop intergroup relationships by creating space for men of color to heal from traumatic experiences, which allowed them to be vulnerable and connect in meaningful ways. The men in this study described intergroup relationships as expanding their support network and helping them to imagine new possibilities for their community. As a result, the participants were inspired to improve Black and Latino relationships in their community. This study can help educators develop transformative MCIs, improve coalition-building, and enhance the educational experiences of men of color.

Dedication

To my wife and daughter.

Korinne thank you for being so strong and brave during this time in our lives. I could not have done this without your unconditional love and support. You have my eternal love.

Kyra long before you were born you inspired me. Never forget that change and progress does not come without struggle and tribulation. But never allow the world to rob you of your hope and joy. You are awesome by nature and excellent by design. This is your legacy.

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To the Claremont Graduate University family. Thank you to all the past and present faculty, staff, and students who have supported my journey

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Historically, America has examined its racial climate through a Black and White binary (Muhammad, 2010; Robinson, 1983; Torok, 1998; Vora & Vora, 2002). However, the rapid increase in people of color in the United States, specifically Asians and Latinos, highlights the need to have a greater understanding of minority group relationships (Craig & Richeson, 2018; Lichter, 2013). More specifically, within the context of Los Angeles, what many refer to as "Black and Brown conflicts" have been seared into the minds of local residents and outside observers. Densely populated neighborhoods, economic recessions, and gang violence have led to tensions that too often turn violent between Black and Brown Angelinos. These incidents are then sensationalized through media coverage. For example, headlines such as "Where Black and Brown Collide" (The Economist, 2007), and "L.A. Latino Gang Targets Blacks" (Mercury News, 2007) further exasperates the tensions between Blacks and Latinos.

These tensions impact various aspects of Angelinos' lives, including their ability to form relationships across racial differences. However, few researchers have examined intergroup relationships through a racial or cultural lens (Cook, 1985; Liu, 2012). Despite higher education institutions becoming more diverse, the majority of studies on racial intergroup relationships among college students examine how communities of color interact with their White peers (Alimo, 2012; Thakral et al., 2016). This approach fails to address the relationships between students of color in our increasingly diverse society. Furthermore, research on boys and men of color tend to examine the experiences of Black and Latino males in isolation (Brooms, 2016;

Pérez, 2017). Within the field of education, there is scarce research examining how men of color develop healthy intergroup relationships across racial differences.

Given this study's narrow focus on intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males, there are student sub-populations that are not covered here but warrant further investigation. Namely, women of color and Asian students. Women of color often go overlooked in literature because it is assumed that they are doing better than males of color (Clark et al., 2013; Person et al., 2017). This assumption is based on aggregate data that shows women of color are more likely to enroll in college and have higher retention and graduation rates. However, a more nuanced examination is needed. For example, women of color are under-represented in STEM fields (Ong, Smith, & Ko, 2018; Reyes, 2011).

Additionally, studies have found that women of color in STEM fields often experience unwelcoming environments and are subject to microaggressions (Lord & Camacho, 2013). In regards to intergroup relationships, studies have shown that healthy peer relationships play an important role in how women of color experience college (Apugo, 2017; Tassie & Givens, 2016). Therefore, there remains a need for further research on the experiences of women of color in higher education institutions, and to investigate how intergroup relationships can support their matriculation and development.

Asian students are another student sub-population who warrant further research. Asians are quickly becoming one of the largest racial groups in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). However, scholars have noted that future studies need to disaggregate data on Asian students by country of origin (Kodama & Dugan, 2013; Teranishi, Lok, & Nguyen, 2013). The grouping of this diverse student population into one classification masks their diverse backgrounds and experiences in higher education. The increase in the overall Asian population

also indicates that there is a greater need to understand intergroup relationships between racially diverse populations.

This current study focuses on intergroup relationships between Black and Latino male college students for four primary reasons. First, the United States continues to have national and regional conversations on the need to improve college completion rates (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Harbour & Smith, 2016; Humphreys, 2012). Policymakers have argued that the United States needs to increase the number of individuals with a college degree. To accomplish this goal, colleges and universities must improve retention and graduation rates among males of color. However, Black and Latino males continue to have higher attrition rates than their peers (Harper, 2012; Harris & Wood, 2014; Pérez & Sáenz, 2017). Therefore, it is essential to identify strategies that institutions can use to promote the matriculation and development of males of color.

Secondly, there continues to be a burgeoning of research on males of color in education. Scholars have called for intersegmental coordination to foster environments where males of color can flourish. As a result, Arkansas, Texas, Georgia, New York, and California have launched statewide efforts to improve educational outcomes for males of color. Within many of these states, Male Centered Initiatives (MCIs) have been used as a tool to support males of color in higher education. Given the prominence of this policy and programmatic intervention, a plethora of scholars and practitioners believe relationships between males of color within MCIs are important and need further investigation (Brooms, 2016; Brooms, Clark, & Smith, 2018; Jackson, Sealey-Ruiz, & Watson, 2014). Therefore, this study shines a light on the need to understand how males of color develop relationships across racial differences.

The third reason this study examines explicitly intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males is that Blacks and Latinos are more likely to attend the same schools. Scholars have documented a variety of reasons Black and Latinos choose to attend similar colleges and universities. For example, Black and Latino students are more likely to attend under-served school districts with fewer college counselors (George-Jackson & Gast, 2015). This makes it difficult for students to get the necessary information about going to college. Furthermore, Ross et al. (2012) argue that a majority of Black and Latino families rely on teachers, counselors, and other school personnel to provide accurate information about colleges. Therefore, Black and Latino students are more likely to be misinformed during the college exploration and selection process. For instance, for Blacks and Latinos, the cost of college is often the determining factor on where they choose to attend (Britton, 2017; Huerta, McDonough, & Allen, 2018). However, Black and Latino students are more likely to over-estimate the cost of college (Nienhusser & Oshio, 2017). As a result, they are more likely to try to save money by attending campuses close to home or attend less selective institutions. Carey (2018) found that familial commitments influenced Black and Latino males' decisions on where to attend college. Since Black and Latino students are more likely to attend the same institutions, it is important for scholars and policymakers to understand peer dynamics between the two groups.

Lastly, it is important to note that although students of color are attending college at higher rates than ever before in the history of the United States, they are still woefully under-represented at the selective institutions (Comeaux, Chapman, & Contreras, 2020; Hill, Bregman, & Andrade, 2015). As a result, Black and Latino students are more likely to attend less selective institutions. These institutions are often referred to as Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) and play a critical role in awarding college degrees to students of color (John & Stage, 2014). Black

and Latino graduation rates at less selective institutions lag behind graduation rates for students of color at more selective institutions. Therefore, there is a need to understand how institutions can better support Black and Latino students in ways that will improve their overall college experience and increase their completion rates.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to examine how Black and Latino males who participated in a Male Centered Initiative (MCI) program at a public 4-year university in Los Angeles, developed intergroup relationships across racial differences. More specifically, this study examined the lived experiences of Black and Latino males in a MCI to see how students made meaning of their relationships with one another. For this study, the term "men of color" refers to Black and Latino males. Additionally, intergroup relationships will be generally defined as friendships, coalitions, and strong bonds that develop between individuals from different racial or ethnic groups. Alderfer (1987) posits that identity group membership is one of the most salient aspects of our development. Identity group membership can include similarities such as race, ethnicity, family, and generation. This study specifically examines intergroup relationships between Black and Latino male college students.

Background

In recent years, various researchers have studied the experiences of men of color in higher education institutions (Brooms, 2015; Harper, 2012; Palmer et al., 2014; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Scholars have identified peer relationships and student engagement as key factors for improving the collegiate experience for men of color (Brooms, 2015; Brooms, Clark & Smith, 2017). More specifically, research indicates that for men of color, peer relationships are one of the most salient aspects of their college experience. Bonds with peers of the same race and

gender serve as a catalyst to help them successfully navigate their college experience (Harper, 2012; Pérez, 2017). Studies have found that men of color often serve as peer mentors to one another. These relationships help them to overcome chilly campus environments and academic challenges (Pérez & Sáenz, 2017; Torres et al., 2006). Therefore, institutions can help improve the college experience for men of color by identifying strategies that they can use to foster intergroup relationships.

For decades, scholars have argued that student engagement is a critical element to college students' development and academic success (Kahu, 2013; Quaye & Harper, 2014). Engaging in the campus environment has shown to facilitate students' academic progress, socioemotional development, and professional development. However, research has also documented barriers to engagement that men of color face in higher education environments (Brooms et al., 2018; Strayhorn, 2010). One of the primary ways that colleges and universities are attempting to facilitate engagement among men of color is through the development and implementation of Male Centered Initiatives. The MCIs serve many roles, such as providing socio-emotional development, linking students with peers, creating a sense of community, and connecting students to campus resources (Brooms et al., 2018). Although some MCIs serve a specific racial/ethnic group (Black or Latino), more colleges are opting to create programs that encompass the diverse experiences of all students who identify as males of color. Recent literature suggests that MCIs can enhance student engagement and help students to develop relationships with other men of color (Brooms et al., 2018; Person et al., 2017). Therefore, as college campuses become more diverse, Male Centered Initiatives programs can be a useful tool for policymakers and practitioners seeking to improve outcomes among men of color.

Demographic shifts. Over the last 20 years, the United States has experienced a seismic demographic shift. According to a report by Pew Research, by the mid-21st-century, half of the population will be racial/ethnic minorities (Passel & Cohen, 2008). The U.S. Census Bureau (2013) revealed that the fastest-growing populations are Latinos and Asians. Between 2002 and 2011, the population of Latinos in the United States grew by 246% (Gasman & Conrad, 2013). Furthermore, between 2000 and 2010, more than half of the United States population growth was driven by the increase in the nation's Latino population. These demographic trends have changed the social dynamics of various communities across the United States

The city of Los Angeles serves as a great case study to examine intergroup relationships through a racial lens. Today, Los Angeles is comprised of 48.7% non-White Latino, 28.4% White, 11.7% Asian, 8.9% African American, and 3.5% two or more races (U.S. Census, 2018). Due to its history, location, and social context, Los Angeles continues to grow more ethnically and racially diverse (U.S. Census, 2018). Since the 1960s, the White population in Los Angeles, California has steadily declined. The Black population peaked in the 1980s and has been declining ever since. The overall population growth in Los Angeles has been driven by increases in Latino and Asian populations. For instance, the 2010 Census found that the percentage of Latinos living in Los Angeles increased by 10% from 1990 to 2010 (Hoeffel et al., 2010). According to a report by the Pew Research Center, Los Angeles County has the nation's largest Latino population. With a population of over 5.8 million, Los Angeles county is home to 11% of Latinos living in the United States (Brown & Lopez, 2013). Due to the steady increase in the Latino population, and decreases in Los Angeles' Black population, the probability that Black Los Angeles residents have Latino neighbors rose from 4% in 1940 to 41% in 2000 (Kun &

Pulido, 2013). The rapid increase in racial/ethnic minorities has impacted various aspects of social life, including education.

Today, students of color are attending college in greater numbers than ever before. According to the National Center for Education and Statistics, undergraduate enrollment increased by 37% between 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2019). Additionally, within the same time frame, enrollment among Latino students increased by 500%. Consequently, in 2012, Latinos replaced African Americans as the largest minority group on college campuses. However, colleges are struggling to provide adequate services to students of color. In particular, colleges are adjusting to drastic demographic shifts while struggling to effectively address complex issues, such as racial microaggressions on campus and working to improve academic outcomes for historically marginalized student populations (Harper, 2013).

Research setting. Due to the large number of racial and ethnic minorities in Los Angeles, the county serves as a great example of how America's population shift is impacting colleges and universities. Los Angeles County is home to six public 4-year institutions. Five of those are a part of the California State University system (CSU), the largest and most diverse university system in the United States. It is comprised of 23 campuses and over 400,000 students. According to the California State University Student Success Dash Board (2019), in 2000, the total percentage of under-represented minority students at the CSU was 29%. In 2015, Latinos comprised 46% of the total student population—Asians were 16%, and African Americans were 4%—indicating that students of color represent the majority of the student population within the CSU system. Furthermore, the CSU student body represents students from various socioeconomic statuses. Over 80% of the students receive financial aid, and 33% are the first in their family to attend college.

According to the CSU's data dashboard (2017), their diverse study body has experienced varying degrees of success. For example, Black and Latino students rank at the bottom of graduation rates. Moreover, there are disparities between the 23 campuses in terms of student success outcomes. As a result, in January of 2016, the CSU launched Graduation Initiative 2025 (CSU, 2019). According to the "Graduation Initiative 2025 Fact Sheet," the purpose of the initiative is to drastically improve completion rates in the CSU while eliminating achievement and equity gaps (CSU, 2019).

The diversity within the CSU makes it an ideal system to examine intergroup relationships across racial differences. The mission of the CSU system is to provide access to higher education to a significant number of California residents. A large percentage of students enrolled on CSU campuses attended high school in the region where they attend college. As a result, the CSU campuses in Los Angeles County are likely to reflect the Black and Latino communities in Los Angeles, California.

This study examines relationships between Black and Latino males at South Bay State University (pseudonym). South Bay State University (SBSU) is a public 4-year institution in Los Angeles County. The SBSU is a member of the CSU system and has a diverse student body with a total population of 16,000 students. Over 60% of the student population are Latino, Black or African American students makeup 11%, 8.2% are Asian, and White students make up 5.9% of the population (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System [IPEDS], 2019).

As colleges struggle to support an increasingly diverse study body properly, there is a need for researchers and policymakers to understand intergroup relationships between communities of color better. The Male Centered Initiatives can serve as a useful tool to help men of color develop relationships with students who have similar experiences. However, there is still

much to be learned about how males of color form relationships across racial differences and how they make meaning of these relationships. Additionally, studies have yet to examine what we can learn from Male Centered Initiatives about how to form healthy peer relationships across racial differences.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for two primary reasons. First, it can help educators to develop policies and services to promote cultural understanding, improve communication, and enhance intergroup relationships. Increasingly diverse student populations have caused researchers to examine how students benefit from a multicultural campus (Bowman, 2011; Denson & Bowman, 2013). Typically, studies investigate diversity by monitoring roommate pairings or the outcomes from diversity courses. These studies typically focus on the learning and development that occurs when minority students engage with their White peers on campus. However, as students of color become a larger percentage of the overall student population, there is a need for a more nuanced examination of relationships between communities of color.

Secondly, this study can provide educators with the tools and information needed to enhance the educational experiences of men of color. Studies on Black and Latino males often fail to investigate their shared experiences in higher education institutions. As more colleges opt to invest in Male Centered Initiatives, it will be important to understand how these programs facilitate intergroup relationships across racial differences. Therefore, there is a need for qualitative studies to examine how Black and Latino males form relationships within Male Centered Initiatives and make meaning of their relationships with one another.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

Research Question #1. How do Black and Latino males develop intergroup relationships within a Male Centered Initiative at a 4-year public institution?

The following sub-questions are addressed in this study:

Research Question #2. How do Male Centered Initiatives facilitate intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males?

Research Question #3. How do Black and Latino males make meaning of their relationships with one another?

Chapter 2 presents the review of literature, along with the theoretical frameworks used in this study to examine how Black and Latino males in a Male of Color Initiative at a public 4-year university developed intergroup relationships across racial differences.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This research project integrates two theoretical frameworks to examine relationships between Black and Latino males. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is utilized as a backdrop to understand the lived experiences of Black and Latino males and examine how conceptions of race affect their bonds with one another. The Theory of Gender Prejudice is used to understand how power, status, and socialization play a critical role in the formation of intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males. The integration of these two theories allow this study to tease apart the nuances of intergroup relationships across racial differences.

Theory of Gender Prejudice

The theory of gender prejudice is a useful framework to examine intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males. The theory is rooted in the Social Dominances theory developed by social psychology researchers Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto. The social dominance theory claims that societies that produce an economic surplus are organized by group-based social hierarchies (Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006). The theory attempts to understand how these power dynamics are developed and sustained. The theory of gender prejudice builds on the social male target hypothesis (SMTH). The SMTH argues that males are more likely to be the main agents and targets of prejudice. However, gender prejudice extends SMTH in three ways. First, gender prejudice examines the difference between defining intergroup prejudice as ingroup favoritism versus outgroup aggression. This distinction is important because when intergroup prejudice is defined as ingroup favoritism, research demonstrates there is no difference between men and women. However, when prejudice is

defined as outgroup aggression, scholars have found that men are the primary agents and targets of out-group aggression and dominance. As a result, scholars have argued that men are more likely than women to maintain systems of domination and oppression. Therefore, we can reasonably assume that the men in this study will be inclined to maintain outgroup aggression, and have less incentive to develop healthy intergroup relationships across racial differences. Thus, according to this theory, the males in this study exist within a social context where they are more likely to be the agents of aggression towards one another, and more likely to be the victims of the other racial group's aggression.

The second way Gender Prejudice extends SMTH is by debunking the claim that out-group aggression always targets subordinate groups. Navarrete et al. (2010) argues that the main motivation for males to dominate out-group males is to collect reproductive resources. Thus, the target of their out-group aggression does not have to be targeted toward subordinate groups. Any act of aggression or dominance of another group is beneficial to them. Nevertheless, male groups who have more power may be more likely to target subordinate groups because there is less risk involved. This extension of SMTH is critical for this study. Typically, intergroup relationships are viewed through a binary lens. White groups are considered to hold positions of power, while individuals of color are considered to be subordinate. However, this study examines intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males. Within the context of Los Angeles, both groups are typically considered to be marginalized racial or ethnic groups. Social events and community contexts often dictate how each group is viewed by society (Cummings & Lambert, 1997; Mindiola, Niemann, & Rodriguez, 2009; Oliver & Wong, 2003; Shin, Leal, & Ellison, 2015). Therefore, there is no explicit power difference between the groups. Thus, both Black and Latino males have the incentive to perform out-group aggression toward one another.

Lastly, Gender Prejudice extends SMTH by arguing that there is an evolutionary explanation as to why men and women differ in terms of intergroup prejudice. Both men and women exhibit prejudice behavior, but their motivations for doing so are often gender-specific. For men, their motivation is to dominate men belonging to other groups to accumulate resources and status. Whereas, historically, women are less likely to experience violence from ingroup men, as opposed to outgroup men. Although women experience violence from ingroup men, the likelihood of being a victim of violence drastically increases when outgroup men have dominated and taken control of a women's ingroup (Navarrete et al., 2010). Additionally, the theory suggests that women have much to lose with intergroup conflict, and due to the social stratification between men and women, they do not have much to gain from outgroup aggression.

Collectively, these three extensions of SMTH point to three predictions of the Gender Prejudice theory. The first prediction is that men will be the principal targets and agents of out-group aggression. Secondly, gender prejudice acknowledges that both men and women equally perpetuate out-group prejudice when it is defined as in-group favoritism. However, men are the main transgressors of intergroup prejudice when it is defined as out-group aggression. The last prediction suggests that men and women are motivated by different factors when it comes to out-group bias. Women's motivation is rooted in fear of out-group men, whereas men's motivation is dominance and social status.

Critical Race Theory

The origins of Critical Race Theory can be traced to legal studies in the 1980s. Scholars such as Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado were concerned that the Civil Rights Movement had stalled, and craftier forms of racism were developing in America (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). At the center was the understanding that race and class subordination were

legally protected. Therefore, they sought to conceptualize new theories and strategies that scholars could use to turn the tide of racial inequity. Today, scholars from various disciplines use critical race theory to examine how the intersection of race, law, and power influences society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

According to Delgado and Stefanic (2017), the critical race theory has six core tenets. The first situates racism as a normal everyday occurrence for people of color. This tenet helps define how America operates. The second tenet is interest convergence, which argues that large segments of America have invested interest in maintaining racism. Furthermore, this concept highlights how perceivable gains in race relations often had more to do with protecting the self-interest of White elites, rather than genuinely being about racial justice. The third feature of CRT is race as a social construction, which claims that race is not fixed or based on genetics. Instead, race is arbitrarily created by society to categorize individuals. The fourth tenet of CRT is differential racialization, which refers to how society racializes different groups depending on the needs such as the labor market. The fifth tenet is intersectionality. Intersectionality acknowledges the layers of identities that each individual possesses and how these layers compound marginality. Lastly, an essential element in CRT is voices of color (counter storytelling). This tenet highlights the critical role of experiential knowledge and seeks to make meaning of the lived experiences of people of color.

In an attempt to help educational researchers utilize the critical race theory, Sólorzano and Yosso (2001) developed CRT tenets specifically for education. First, the centrality of the intersectionality of race and racism speaks to the inextricable link between racism and schooling practices. This theme argues that schooling practices, such as standardized tests, have been used to marginalize students of color. The second theme, the challenge to the dominant ideology,

examines the role that educational institutions play in maintaining systems of oppression. For example, educational institutions peddle notions of meritocracy and intelligence as justifications for social inequalities rather than uncovering power structures and institutionalized racism. The third CRT theme in education is the commitment to social justice. This tenant emphasizes the need for research that seeks to eradicate social ills such as racism, poverty, and sexism. The fourth theme, centrality of experiential knowledge, situates the experiences of students of color as legitimate knowledge. Lastly, the fifth theme of the interdisciplinary perspective, emphasizes the need to integrate methodological tools and theories from women's studies and ethnic studies to help nuance the experiences of students of color.

The integration of CRT and Gender Prejudice allows for a critical examination of how Black and Latino males navigate social structures in the shadow of White supremacy. More specifically, I have chosen to use CRT because it underscores the role of race, racism, and power relations in the experiences of Black and Latino males. In this study, critical race theory is used as a framework to examine how racist laws and policies have marginalized Black and Latinos in Los Angeles and pitted the two communities against each other. For example, racism played a central role in segregating Black and Latinos into neighboring communities where they were left to fight for scarce resources. Moreover, the CRT is used to provide insight into how the tension between Black and Latino communities permeates educational settings, beginning in K-12 institutions and extending to colleges and universities. Thus, CRT can help us understand how racism has created structures that pit Black and Latino males against one another.

Gender prejudice is particularly useful because it situates males as the main perpetrators and targets of out-group bias. Therefore, this framework can be used to understand the gendered dynamic between Black and Latino males. The messages that males of color receive about

expectations for their gender performance can play a critical role in intergroup relationships. Moreover, the combination of gender and institutionalized racism provides Black and Latino males with greater incentive to act in a hostile manner toward one another. As a result, Male Centered Initiatives can play a critical role in facilitating healthy intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males.

This study utilizes these two theories as a tool to understand the experiences of Black and Latino males participating in Male Centered Initiatives programs at public 4-year universities. Although all CRT tenets are critical for thoroughly examining race in America, for the purposes of this study, two of the educational CRT tenets are emphasized. The first theme used is the centrality of experiential knowledge. This tenet centers on the voices and experiences of participants in this study. Their experiences and insight provide valuable knowledge that scholars can use to understand Black and Latino male dynamics better, and help to identify tangible solutions that educators can use to facilitate intergroup relationships across racial differences. Secondly, I use the educational theme, centrality, and intersectionality of race and racism. Within urban communities like Los Angeles County, Black and Latino males are bombarded with racist messages and images of one another. These messages are rooted in White supremacy and attempt to dehumanize and demonize Black and Latino communities. The negative images and messages serve as a vehicle for individuals to "other" the opposite group, even though they live in close proximity to one another. Therefore, this tenet helps to provide insight into how the participants' daily interaction with race and racism is used to make meaning of their relationships with one another within a student success program designed to promote brotherhood and solidarity.

Black and Latino Racial Tensions

The population growth among racial and ethnic minorities in America has increased competition for scarce resources in urban communities. Kaufmann (2003) suggested that the competition for housing, health care, and educational opportunities among racial and ethnic minorities often overshadows their similarities and prevents coalition-building efforts. For example, Catanzarite's (2000) study on earnings and segregation of immigrant Latinos points out that after the 1992 L.A. Rebellion, Black construction workers complained that a majority of the rebuilding work in South Central Los Angeles was going to Latinos. The Mayor of New Orleans shared similar sentiments in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. He stated that he feared New Orleans would receive an influx of Mexican workers during the rebuilding process (Roig-Franzia, 2006). Similarly, Gay (2006) found that Black perceptions of Latinos can vary based on economic opportunities. When African Americans struggle economically and perceive Latinos as being economically advantaged, then Blacks are more likely to develop negative sentiments towards Latinos (Gay, 2006). As these examples demonstrate, competition over scarce resources plays a critical role in influencing how African Americans view Latinos.

Latino's perceptions of Blacks are often influenced by White Supremacy. McClain et al. (2006) found that Latinos often hold negative stereotypes about Blacks and view them as lazy, violent, and sexually promiscuous. In a study on racial group perceptions, Sanchez (2008) found that Latinos view themselves as more similar to Whites than Blacks. However, Whites did not share the same view towards Latinos. Nevertheless, it is essential to note that Latinos are comprised of a diverse population. Therefore, their perceptions of self and their perceptions of others can vary drastically depending on the makeup of their population, and geographic region. For instance, in Los Angeles County, 43% of Latinos marked themselves as "White" on the U.S.

Census, 0.5% identified as “Black,” and 53% marked themselves as “other” (U.S. Census, 2012). Whereas, on the East Coast, more Latinos choose Black as their racial categorization (Pastor, 2013).

Moreover, the way Latinos self-identify on the Census has changed over time, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011); nationally, fewer Latinos are identifying as White, and there has been a steady increase in the number of Latinos who identify as Black. In recognition of the diversity within the Latino community, scholars have examined the impact of intragroup differences. For example, Haywood (2017) used the narratives of Afro-Latinos to understand anti-blackness and colorism within the Latino community. The diversity within the Latino community amplifies the need to investigate Black and Brown relationships within specific social contexts.

Black and Brown Relationships in Los Angeles

In Los Angeles, Black and Latino relationships are heavily influenced by White supremacy. According to Gillborn (2006), White supremacy refers to the way everyday policies, actions, and power dynamics are structured to benefit White people. Additionally, Ansley (1997) argues that White supremacy is a method used to peddle the conscious and unconscious idea of White superiority as a natural facet of our lives. Thus, the Black and Latino dynamics in Los Angeles are shaped by a history of intentional investments in Whiteness that systematically disadvantaged communities of color. Due to the intentional investments in Whiteness, Black and Latino communities were left to compete with one another for scarce resources. For instance, competition for overcrowded neighborhoods and low wage jobs are the direct result of racist policies. Understanding this history provides more insight into the current formation of Black and Latino relationships.

The tension between Black and Brown Angelinos did not always exist. In 1781, 44 settlers of Spanish, Mexican, Afro-Mexican, and Native American descent arrived in Los Angeles, California (Mindiola et al., 2009; Pastor, 2013). Soon after that, much of the racial hostility and violence was directed at the Tongva, who are the original inhabitants of the Los Angeles (LA) region. According to Kun and Pulido (2013), African American migration to LA increased in the 1920s. However, Black Angelinos were not the primary focus of ethnic hatred. Instead, Mexicans, Chinese, and Japanese suffered from mistreatment and legal discrimination.

Segregation. Residential segregation has been a driving force in shaping Black and Latino relationships in Los Angeles. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was established in 1934 through the National Housing Act. The goal was to stabilize the housing market and promote homeownership. According to Hirsch (2000), the FHA and local realtors worked with investors to develop Residential Security Maps, which are commonly referred to as redlining. Neighborhoods were assigned colors based on their investment risk. Poor investment scores were given to Black and Brown neighborhoods whereas White neighborhoods were deemed good investments.

Additionally, policies were put into place to prevent people of color from moving into White neighborhoods. Hirsch (2000) points out that the United States Commission on Civil Rights credited FHA policies and practices with building all-White neighborhoods around every major city in the United States. In Los Angeles, redlining practices played an instrumental role in determining where Black and Latino communities were formed. The history, and impact, of residential segregation in LA sheds light on the modern-day dynamic between Black and Latino Angelinos.

The discovery of oil in Los Angeles led to the city's first segregation policies. Beginning in the 1890s, oil discovery in Los Angeles resulted in a significant increase in the overall population. Los Angeles quickly became one of the world's largest producers of oil (Quam-Wickham, 2001). As a result, White workers from the east coast, migrated to Los Angeles seeking employment in the booming oil industry. As the population increased, the petroleum industry worked with housing developers to ensure community development aligned with the investments being made in oil extractions (Cumming, 2018). In order to protect investments, the oil industry and housing developers worked to make sure the value of oil-rich lands mirrored the value of the homes being developed in proximity. Exclusionary policies were instituted to preserve White neighborhoods. Valuable home mortgages were made available to White residents, while Black and Brown residents were denied access to these beneficial home loans (Cumming, 2018). Communities that did not have racially exclusionary policies received less desirable home mortgages and fewer investments. These early policies resulted in the development of the first Black and White enclaves in Los Angeles.

The Residential Security Maps developed during the Great Depression cemented LA's early segregation policies. Redlining practices marked areas such as South Los Angeles and East Los Angeles as being polluted communities not suited for future investment due to its residents (Cumming, 2018; Ong et al., 2016). After World War II, immigration among Mexicans and African Americans increased, but they were only able to receive home loans in redlined neighborhoods (Cumming, 2018; Quam-Wickham, 2001). As a result, Black and Mexican enclaves were developed in polluted areas with little interest from investors (Cumming, 2018). For example, according to a 1966 Census report, 81% of South Los Angeles residents were African American in 1965.

Additionally, 75% of East Los Angeles residents were Latino in 1965. These communities suffered from pollution, low financial investments, and less-than-stellar home mortgages. Nixon (2011) refers to these conditions as slow violence, which undermined the health and wealth of Black and Latino communities for generations. These intentional investments in Whiteness normalized everyday policies that benefited White residents and marginalized communities of color.

The 1970s brought significant changes for the Black and Latino relationships in Los Angeles. Most notably, in residential segregation and the labor market. In regards to segregation, the Fair Housing Act of 1968, along with the Supreme Court's rulings outlawing segregation and racial covenants, began to take root in the 1970s (Cumming, 2018). As a result, segregation slowly decreased, and residential neighborhoods became more racially and ethnically diverse. The most popular method of measuring segregation is a tool known as the Index of Dissimilarity (DI scores). The DI scores range from 0.0 (complete integration) to 1.0 (complete segregation). Table 2.1 shows the DI scores for residential segregation in Los Angeles from 1970–2014. In 1970, the highest DI score was between Blacks and Whites with a score of 89.7, indicating that 89.7% of the Black (or White) population in Los Angeles would have to move from highly concentrated areas to less concentrated areas to have complete integration.

Additionally, in 1970, the second-highest DI score was for Latinos and Blacks at 87.9. However, since the 1970s segregation has slowly declined for most groups. Notably, Blacks and Latinos have experienced the most significant decline in segregation with a drop of 34 points since the 1970s. Meaning, that now more than ever, Black and Latinos are more likely to live in the same neighborhoods in Los Angeles.

Table 2.1

Household Dissimilarity Indices

Racial Groups	1970	1980	1990	2000	2014
Black – White	89.7	79.3	72.4	68.9	66.4
Latino –White	60.9	54.5	57.3	60.6	60.1
Asian – White	52.1	46.6	46.2	49.2	48.6
Asian – Black	76.5	74.0	68.6	68.4	66.2
Asian – Latino	60.0	46.7	47.0	53.2	53.0
Black – Latino	87.9	72.4	61.3	56.4	53.5

Note: Adapted from "Race, Ethnicity, and Income Segregation in Los Angeles," Ong, Pech, Chhea, & Lee (2016). UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge.

Another method to measure segregation in Los Angeles is by examining Census tracts. Ong et al. (2016) studied tracts where residents live with a majority (50–60%), or a super-majority (70% or more) of their same race/ethnic peers. The data revealed that, in 1970, 89% of Los Angeles Whites lived in White super-majority neighborhoods, but that number declined to 37% in 2014. Furthermore, the number of Blacks living in Black super-majority neighborhoods has declined from 69% in 1970 to 16% in 2014. As segregation between Blacks and Whites has decreased, we see an increase in the number of Latinos and Asians living in ethnic enclaves. In 1970, 1% of Asians lived in neighborhoods that were majority Asian. In 2014, that number increased to 20%. Similarly, the percentage of Latinos living in Latino majority tracts increased from 28% in 1970 to 59% in 2014. The quick rise in population among Asians and Latinos helps explain the increase in the percentages of their population living in neighborhoods where their ethnic group makes up the majority.

Today, segregation is typically the result of institutionalized racism and racial/ethnic differences. Ong et al. (2016) examined what racial segregation in Los Angeles would look like if it were purely based on social class. The study assessed residential and income data from 1970–2014 in Los Angeles. Their findings revealed that income only accounts for a small percentage of segregation. Instead, segregation has mostly been the result of institutionalized racism and individuals' preferences to living with their own racial or ethnic group. The data from these studies reveal how institutionalized racism has shaped Black and Latino communities in Los Angeles. Today, more than any other time in the history of Los Angles, Black and Latino Angelinos are living in the same neighborhoods. This is mostly the result of Black and Latino residents suffering from racist policies and exclusionary practices. Thus, creating a Black and Latino paradox in Los Angeles. These two communities share in the struggle to turn the tide of social inequities. Yet, their own racial biases result in a preference to live among their own racial and ethnic group. As a result, it is essential for researchers and policymakers to understand better how to develop healthy intergroup relationships between Black and Latino communities.

Employment. During World War II, race relations in Los Angeles experienced a dramatic shift. The combination of racist Jim Crow laws in the south, and the demand for workers in the defense industry in the north, fueled the "Great Migration" (Pastor, 2013; Wilkerson, 2011). As a result, African Americans fled southern communities and settled in urban cities such as Los Angeles. This exodus of Blacks out of the south changed the face of the United States. Kun and Pulido (2013) suggest that the surge in the African American population led to an increase in racial oppression for Blacks in Los Angeles. Prior to the Great Migration, Jim Crow laws were not as commonplace in Los Angeles. However, as the Black population increased, Jim Crow laws began to become more prominent, and racial segregation became more

stringent. Additionally, Black workers found it difficult to get a job in the defense industry. At the same time, Mexican-origin workers began to receive more opportunities in the Los Angeles formal economy. This set the stage for the Black and Brown conflict.

The 1970s ushered in de-industrialization in Los Angeles, which affected migration patterns for Blacks and Latinos. Manufacturing jobs quickly left Los Angeles. In large part, Mexican-origin residents were able to hold onto the small number of manufacturing and construction jobs that remained (Pastor, 2013). However, due to racial discrimination, African American residents experienced the brunt of the economic downturn. Unemployment became a severe issue among Black residents, despite more Black workers entering the public sector (Pastor, 2013). As unemployment rates rose, gang involvement increased as well. Additionally, gangs shifted their focus to drugs, which brought waves of violence through Los Angeles. The lack of job opportunities and an increase in gang violence motivated Black families, who had the means to move, to relocate out of South Los Angeles. Black families typically chose to settle in suburban areas outside of Los Angeles. The migration of Black families out of South Los Angeles led to the community being repopulated by Latino immigrants (Fishman, 2005).

For the last three decades, immigration has transformed the Los Angeles County population (Pastor, 2013). In particular, immigration from Central America has led to a shift in using the term "Mexican-origin residents" to the term "Latino." Additionally, the rapid growth in the Latino population transformed the Los Angeles Unified School District. High schools that were once pillars in the Black community for being amongst the few predominantly African American schools in the region, such as Fremont High School, Washington Prep, Dorsey High School, and Locke High School, are now majority Latino (Pastor, 2013). As a result, this era has seen an increase in Black and Brown tensions in the K-12 system. For example, debates over

language use in schools have ensued, and advocates in the Latino community argue that Black parents are not supportive of multilingual education (Shin et al., 2015).

These conflicts have been coupled with violence between the Black and Brown community. For instance, Latino gangs used violence to target Black residents to push Black Angelinos out of specific neighborhoods. A report by the Los Angeles County of Commission on Human Relations (2008) found that African Americans and Latinos are more likely than anyone else to be targeted for hate crimes. Furthermore, Latino victims are more likely to be targeted by Blacks, and Black victims are more likely to be targeted by Latinos. Lastly, after September 11th, Latinos' unauthorized entrance into the United States was increasingly framed as "illegal" (Taylor & Schroeder, 2010). This phenomenon has been used to suggest that the long-standing issue of Black unemployment in Los Angeles is the result of Latino immigration (Fujioka, 2011; Taylor & Schroeder, 2010). This has further strained Black and Brown relations in Los Angeles.

Indeed, the history of Black and Latino relationships in Los Angeles is complex. The recent immigration trend and fascination with Black and Brown conflicts have a profound impact on the daily interactions between African Americans and Latinos living in LA. Similarly, population changes across the United States have placed more of an emphasis on interactions between minority groups. As the United States shifts its focus on increasing the percentage of Americans with college degrees, understanding minority group relationships can be a key factor in supporting their educational attainment. However, studies on coalition-building efforts between racial groups often take place outside of the field of education (i.e., political science, labor studies), and studies are often on non-college-aged students. According to Literte (2011), Black and Latino college students are an ideal sub-population to examine intergroup relationships because educational institutions have the potential to either reinforce or challenge

tensions between Blacks and Latinos. Additionally, Lewis, Chesler, and Forman (2000) argue that in college, students are more willing to unlearn socially-constructed ideologies about other groups. However, too often, colleges and universities miss this opportunity to affect group relationships positively.

Intergroup Relationships in Higher Education

For decades, scholars have explored the benefits of diversity within colleges and universities. It is a commonly held belief that students benefit from engaging in a diverse environment (Bowman, 2011; Galinsky et al., 2015; Gurin et al., 2002). As a result, colleges and universities have implemented various diversity initiatives in an attempt to promote multiculturalism (Crose, 2011; Williams, 2013). However, experimental studies on the benefits of diversity have produced mixed results.

For example, West, Dovidio, and Pearson (2014) examined randomized roommate pairings over six weeks. Participants were asked to complete a survey at the beginning of the six weeks. Additionally, during the six weeks, participants were asked to record their feelings about their roommate, as well as how they perceived their roommates' level of anxiety. Their findings revealed that the perception of high anxiety among roommates led to low tracking accuracy. The authors argued that perceiving high anxiety in a roommate can lead to negative perceptions of the roommate's interest in sustaining a relationship. Also, this led to individuals having more negative perceptions of their roommates. This study suggests that highlighting differences between racial groups can interfere with tracking accuracy, which results in individuals being unable to infer someone else's feelings.

Other researchers suggest that students will benefit from diversity if institutions take a proactive role in engaging students in meaningful ways. Lopez and Zuniga (2011) point out that

intergroup dialogue is an effective way to help students benefit from diversity. The main difference between intergroup dialogue and other approaches is that intergroup dialogue emphasizes understanding and action while having students study the root causes of structural inequality. The main challenges that colleges face in implementing intergroup dialogue is that it takes a commitment from the institution and students. In order for it to be effective, there needs to be sustained facilitated interactions.

When done appropriately, the intergroup dialogue has proven to produce engaged students and collaborative leaders. For example, Sorensen and colleagues (2009) offer a critical dialogic model as a tool to develop positive intergroup relationships, understanding, and collaboration. One of the challenges with experimental studies on intergroup dialogue is that they do not study sustained interactions (Sorensen et al., 2009). Furthermore, studies that have been done on roommates do not examine facilitated interaction between students. Therefore, Sorensen and colleagues argue that sustained facilitated interaction is a critical element to intergroup relationships. The authors claim that a critical dialogic model of intergroup dialogue promotes action to combat social inequity, and it improves relationships between groups.

To demonstrate the impact of sustained facilitated interactions in intergroup relationships, Gurin et al. (2004) used a longitudinal study to investigate the differences between students who participated in an Intergroup Relationship Program and their peers who did not participate. The authors predicted that students in the Intergroup Relationship Program would show positive behaviors such as greater perspective taking, an understanding that differences do not have to result in conflict, and a greater desire to engage in civic engagement activities after college. Their findings showed that democratic citizenship is strengthened when students have experiences with diverse peers. The degree to which this takes place depends on the quality of

the experience students have with diverse peers. Therefore, the authors argued that colleges and universities have to capitalize on diversity by creating programs that engage students in meaningful ways and allows them to learn from one another.

In the article "Understanding Difference Through Dialogue," Thakral et al. (2016) examined the impact of a freshman eight-week Intergroup Dialogue course. Their study used a control group to compare measurements on the Multi-university Intergroup Dialogue Research Project Guidebook. The experiment group consisted of 99 students who completed the course and took a pre-test before the course and a post-test after the course. The control group was given the post-test without the 8-week course. Their findings revealed significant gains in students' post-test scores compared to their pre-test scores. Furthermore, students in the experimental group scored higher than students in the control group in areas such as intergroup relationships, intergroup collaboration and action, and attitudes toward diversity and higher education.

These studies amplify the need for higher education institutions to identify effective ways to foster learning from interactions across racial differences. The literature also highlights the need for a trained facilitator to help guide conversations. However, research on intergroup relationships in higher education is limited. For example, a majority of the literature examines how minority groups engage with their White peers (Sorensen et al., 2009; Thakral et al., 2016). Due to our increasingly diverse society, there is a need for us to understand how minority groups make meaning of their interactions with one another and how they can develop healthy intergroup relationships. Subsequently, men of color are often at the center of conflict between Black and Brown communities, and peers of the same race and gender are critical to their success in higher education. Therefore, it is beneficial to identify strategies that help expand their peer group and facilitate healthy intergroup relationships across racial differences.

Scholars have noted that college is an ideal time to engage students in diversity work. At this time, students are developing their identity and open to new ideas (Graham-Bailey et al., 2018; Literte, 2011). Therefore, it is vital to understand the experiences of men of color in higher education institutions and learn how, if at all, these institutions can facilitate intergroup relationships among Black and Latino males.

Men of Color in Higher Education

A plethora of researchers has examined the need to increase college completion rates for Black and Latino males (Jenkins, 2006; Pérez & Sáenz, 2017; Sáenz et al., 2008; Wood, 2010; Wood & Turner, 2010). More recently, this topic has received even more attention due to colleges and universities focusing their efforts on closing the achievement gap, and increasing the number of Americans with college degrees (Matthews & Powell, 2016). Despite the burgeoning of research on men of color in higher education, further research is needed in order to properly equip policymakers and educators with the necessary information to improve educational outcomes for Black and Latino males.

Improving college completion rates is a national priority that will have a significant impact on America's global competitiveness. Russell (2011) argued that America is losing global competitiveness due to a lack of college completion. When including America's older workers, the country is in the top five of the world's largest advanced and emerging economies. However, among workers aged 25–34, America is ranked 15th (Russell, 2011). The lack of educational attainment will result in America not being able to provide enough qualified workers for the 21st-century labor market. Over half of the new jobs being created require some form of post-secondary training (Matthews & Powell, 2016). If policymakers and educators cannot improve educational outcomes for men of color, it will have a detrimental effect on the future of the

United States. Therefore, the poor educational outcomes for men of color can have pragmatic implications on the economic success of the United States.

The challenges that Black and Latino males face en route to higher education have been well documented. For example, scholars have cited socialization factors as negatively affecting Black and Latino males' attitudes towards school (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Noguera, Hurtado, & Fergus, 2013; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). More specifically, scholars cited socially-constructed ideologies regarding masculinity and race as having a detrimental effect on Black and Latino males' educational trajectories. Furthermore, Black and Latino males are more likely to attend impoverished schools where they have less access to rigorous course work and where they are more likely to be diagnosed with a learning disability and suspended from school (Artiles, 2013; Owens, Reardon, & Jencks, 2016; Rogers & Freelon, 2012; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2011; Wilson, 2014). The combination of socialization factors and bad experiences in school can negatively impact the academic performance and educational aspirations of men of color.

While in school, Black and Latino males often experience a cultural divide. Noguera et al. (2013) argued that Latino students suffer from an educational system that does not acknowledge or affirm their unique cultural heritage and epistemology. Instead of validating diverse cultural backgrounds, schools have historically problematized and penalized differences that students bring to the classroom. Spring (2014) argues that schools were created to assimilate or "Americanize" different ethnicities into White middle-class norms. If students do not acquiesce to these expectations, they are penalized or feel burdened. For example, Pérez (2017) identified the Latino concept of "familismo or familism" as a point of cultural diversion within schools. Familismo is defined as Latino children's dedication and feelings of responsibility and

solidarity to immediate and extended family. Pérez (2017) argued that Latino males are often expected to contribute financially to their families.

Consequently, this may result in delaying their education or opting out of school entirely. Similarly, Abrica and Martinez (2016) found that Latino males' demand to work provides unique academic challenges for them. Nevertheless, many educators may interpret the dedication of Latino males to immediately provide for their family as a lack of valuing education. However, for Latino males, not meeting their family obligation can be seen as abandoning their own family. Such cultural divides in education may contribute to the disparate academic achievement outcomes among men of color.

The aforementioned challenges that Black and Latino males face limits their chances of attending college. Noguera et al. (2013) found that Black males had a 48% high school graduation rate, and Latino males had a rate of 49%. Men of color are more likely to enroll at community colleges (Gardenshire-Crooks et al., 2010; Harper, 2012). Thus, Black and Latino males are more likely to attend less selective institutions where they have a higher likelihood of dropping out or delaying their time to degree (Sólorzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005). As a result, enrollment rates at 4-year institutions are impacted. Strayhorn (2010) found that Black males account for 4.3% of the total enrollment at 4-year institutions, which is the same percentage as in 1976. Similarly, Sólorzano et al. (2005) found that 71% of Latino students who enter community colleges aspire to transfer to a 4-year institution; however, it is estimated that only seven to twenty percent of them do.

The challenges that men of color face en route to higher education are multifaceted and complex. Social expectations, combined with adverse school culture and limited pathways restrict college access (Palmer et al., 2014; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2011). Black and Latino males

who do enter post-secondary education often do so through community colleges (Harris & Wood, 2014). Once on campus, men of color face different challenges that serve as barriers to their matriculation and completion. Specifically, scholars have identified campus climate, academic and social isolation, and lack of institutional agents as barriers to post-secondary success (Brooms, 2015; Gardenshire-Crooks et al., 2010; Palmer et al., 2014).

Campus climate. Various researchers have examined the academic progress of men of color in higher education, and have identified campus climate as a barrier to college completion (Maldonado, Rhoads, & Buenavista, 2005; Noguera et al., 2013; Palmer, Davis, & Maramba, 2010; Palmer et al., 2014; Pérez, 2017; Sáenz et al., 2008). In their book, "Black Male Collegians: Increasing Access, Retention, and Persistence in Higher Education," Palmer et al. (2014) examined factors that cultivate college access, retention, and the graduation of Black males across multiple types of institutions. The authors found that Black males experience chilly campus climates and view their colleges as unwelcoming. More specifically, the authors point out that Black males are often faced with low expectations and must overcome prejudices regarding their intellectual abilities. The unwelcoming atmosphere on a college campus can result in disengagement among Black males.

Similarly, researchers have found the campus climate to be a hindrance for Latino males. Gardenshire-Crooks et al. (2010) found that despite Latino males arriving on campus with positive impressions of the campus environment, it was followed by negative experiences with faculty or staff based on how they looked. As a result, students felt like they were stereotyped. Bad interactions with faculty and staff can negatively impact the way students perceive their campus climate. Poor relationships can cause students to believe that their college does not take

them seriously, which may result in them disconnecting from the campus entirely (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009).

Men of color interpret their campus climate in a variety of ways. For example, Carrillo (2013) found that students not feeling like their culture aligns with the norms on campus could influence their perceptions of the campus climate. To understand how Mexican-origin males use their conceptions and connections of home to navigate post-secondary education successfully, Carrillo (2013) conducted life history interviews that spanned over a year. The data suggested that Latino men struggle to balance their home culture with their college expectations. As a result, Carrillo found that they experience isolation and a sense of loss.

Other research has shown that men of color take note of the campus climate by the hegemonic language used inside and outside of the classroom. Bailey and Moore (2004) conducted a study on the mental health of Black males. Their findings revealed that educators often describe Black men with negative words like endangered, dysfunctional, dangerous, lazy, and at-risk. Additionally, multiple studies have suggested that Black males feel burdened due to their faculty and peers' expectations of them to speak and perform on behalf of all Black people (Harper, 2012). The frequent use of derogatory labels perpetuates negative stereotypes among educators and creates an unwelcoming campus environment for students. Furthermore, when faculty and students articulate that they expect their Black students to be able to speak and perform on behalf of all Black people, it puts an unfair burden on these students, which causes them to feel out of place.

Academic and social isolation. Researchers have often found that men of color must overcome academic and social isolation in college. In "Terms of Engagement," Gardenshire-Crooks et al. (2010) use qualitative research methods to examine the experiences of 87 men

across four community colleges. Their findings revealed that Black and Latino males experienced isolation from faculty and staff, as well as their peers. Significantly few students reported having close relationships with faculty or staff. Furthermore, the researchers found that due to past experiences, many of the young men believed friendships in college were futile. The students highlighted past relationships with friends who did not attend college or eventually became involved with drugs or criminal activity. In a focus group with the students, the young men specifically stated that they were not in college to make friends. Essentially, the young men in the study were articulating that they were able to stay focused and enroll in college by not becoming distracted with peers. Therefore, they saw focusing on friendships as a possible pitfall to their educational goals.

However, research has shown that college peers and social networks have positive impacts on student success (Rodriguez, Massey, & Sáenz, 2016; Rodriguezstate et al., 2019; Strayhorn, 2008). Despite their lack of interest in making friends, the students in Gardenshire-Crooks et al.'s (2010) study articulated that they desire more spaces designed specifically for men. The findings from this study speak to the challenges that Black and Latino males face with their transition to college, which often results in them feeling isolated. These studies speak to the need for institutions to invest in spaces designed to connect men of color with peers who share similar experiences and have similar goals.

Social expectations also play a role in Black and Latino males experiencing isolation. For example, Pérez (2017) found that Latino males are raised with the expectation to be brave, strong, hardworking, and family contributors. As a result, Latino males in college felt pressure to work and pay for school, which led to them having less time to dedicate to studying and expanding their social networks. Also, due to masculine constructs, Latino males felt they could

not ask for help and did not engage with faculty (Pérez, 2017). This additional pressure can lead to a lack of disengagement in college and poor mental and emotional health. Furthermore, it amplifies the paradox that men of color face in higher education. Prior to arriving in higher education, Black and Latino males are often socialized to believe that their manhood is tied to their ability to handle things independently. They also receive warnings about peers being roadblocks to their success. Nevertheless, Black and Latino males desire spaces created for them to connect with other males of color who share similar goals and aspirations.

Lack of institutional agents. Multiple researchers have highlighted the critical role that institutional agents and role models have on campus (Linares Rendón & Muñoz, 2011; Pascarella, Terenzini, & Feldman, 2005). These individuals serve as mentors and advocates for marginalized students. However, colleges and universities suffer from too few educators of color to serve as institutional agents and role models. In 2010, there were 32 Black undergraduates for every one Black faculty at the 20 largest public universities in the United States (Turner, González, & Wood, 2008). Turner et al. (2008) found that faculty of color were disproportionately affected by service expectations. Faculty of color often had to serve as advisors, mentors, and problem-solvers for marginalized students. The rate of involvement for faculty of color exceeded their White counterparts due to Black students seeking out Black faculty more often.

Despite the extra time that minority faculty devote, they cannot support and mentor every student of color on campus. The lack of mentors and institutional agents can result in burnout for faculty of color and can negatively impact Black and Latino males' progress in college. Harper (2013) introduced the term "Onlyness," which is defined as "the psycho-emotional burden of having to strategically navigate a racially politicized space occupied by few peers, role models,

and guardians from one's same racial or ethnic group" (p. 189). Men of color who do not have role models often feel burdened with being spokespersons for minority issues, and are less likely to engage with faculty and staff (Turner et al., 2008). For example, Pérez (2017) found that less than one-fourth of students in the study had a meaningful connection with faculty or staff. Many students expressed hesitation to connect with faculty due to fears of fulfilling stereotypes.

For Black and Latino males, pathways in and through higher education are marked with unique experiences that affect their college access and completion. Scholars point to environmental factors, campus climate, academic and social isolation, and a lack of institutional agents as factors that contribute to the poor educational outcomes for men of color. Palmer et al. (2014) found that two-thirds of Black males who begin college will never finish. Additionally, Sáenz and Ponjuan (2009) described Latino males as vanishing from the educational pipeline and note that the degree attainment gap between Latino males and Latino females is widening. Although the research mentioned above helps to explain the inequitable outcomes, it is just as important for educators and policymakers to understand how they can support men of color in college.

Peer Relationships and College Success

Recently, scholars have set out to examine what educators and policymakers can learn from men of color who have successfully navigated their college experience. Pérez (2017) used a phenomenological approach to understand how 21 Latino males' academic determination was nurtured and sustained by their cultural wealth. The study was conducted at two selective 4-year residential institutions. Employing an asset-based approach, Pérez framed opened ended questions using Yosso's (2005) model of Community Cultural Wealth. The study revealed that despite students entering college with unclear goals, and having very few faculty and

administrators to serve as role models, students were motivated to succeed. Students' motivation stemmed from their desire to serve others and escape poverty. In addition to motivational factors, the students used their peers to affirm and sustain their familial and social capital. These forms of capital enhanced their resolve to earn a college degree.

Similarly, in response to deficit-based approaches to Latino males' collegiate experiences, Pérez and Sáenz, (2017) used qualitative methods to explore how Latino males are successful at selective institutions. The authors identified three major themes. The first, "academic thriving," refers to the students embodying academic learning and determination. The students in their study described their most salient learning experiences as taking place outside of the classroom through leadership opportunities and other educationally purposeful activities that enhanced their learning in the classroom. The second theme, "intrapersonal thriving," refers to the ability of the students to thrive despite dealing with complex challenges. For example, students were able to develop coping strategies for the hostile campus climate. This allowed students to reframe negative experiences into learning opportunities. Lastly, the third theme, "interpersonal thriving," refers to the strong connections students had with their families, peers, and communities that supported their efforts to earn a degree. Students specifically highlighted peer relationships and opportunities to serve their families and communities as salient methods of remaining connected to a support system.

Shaun Harper's (2012) "Black Male Student Success in Higher Education: A Report from the National Black Male College Achievement Study" interviewed 219 students across multiple institutions. The average GPA of students who participated in the study was 3.0, and nearly half of the participants were first-generation college students. The purpose of the study was to understand how Black males have successfully transitioned in and matriculated through college.

The findings revealed that high expectations of going to college were a critical factor for the students. Many of the young men shared that it was not a matter of if they were going to college, but where they would attend. The participants in the study believed they were successful because Summer Bridge programs and older same-race peers helped them with the college transition process. Students specifically described older same-race peers as serving as peer mentors, directing them to valuable resources, connecting them to information networks, and introducing them to engagement opportunities. As a result, the participants in this study had meaningful relationships with faculty and administrators. In addition to being connected to faculty and staff, the students participated in enrichment activities such as study abroad, internships, and student organizations.

Moreover, multiple scholars have examined the effect that peers have on men of color. Urias et al. (2016) conducted a phenomenological study to identify successful strategies for men of color attending a community college. Their findings revealed that students who successfully navigated their community college experience developed positive relationships with male peers. Comparably, Strayhorn (2008) found similar results. Strayhorn's study used data from the College Student Experiences Questionnaire Research Program. The findings demonstrated that meaningful relationships improved the likelihood of Black students being satisfied with their college experience.

Other studies conducted on peer effects among men of color have contradicted previous studies that have portrayed peers as being possible negative influences on academic success. For example, Harper's (2007) study on peer support among Black males examined high-achieving students at predominantly White universities and found that the participants identified their peers as being the most important factor in their success. Participants indicated that their same-race

peers significantly enhanced their experience by serving as their most valuable resource for validation and encouragement. Harper points out that there were no signs of internal racism in any of the interviews. This contradicts Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) findings on collective identity among Black students. In their study, Fordham and Ogbu suggested that Black students reduce their effort in school due to the threat of "acting White." More specifically, their findings indicate that Black students remained disengaged from school in order to be accepted by their peers.

Multiple authors have identified peer support as playing an essential role in the academic success of Latino males. Torres et al. (2006) examined the experience of first-generation Latino students across diverse types of 4-year institutions. Their study revealed that Latino males did not interact with faculty due to fears of feeling foolish or fulfilling a stereotype. As a result, the students relied on their peers for critical information. Additionally, peers helped students cope with stressors.

The findings from these studies indicate that peers play a critical role in helping men of color navigate their post-secondary experience. More specifically, peers help men of color transition into college and earn their degree by connecting them to valuable support networks, introducing them to engagement opportunities, and affirming and enhancing their cultural capital. Therefore, it is crucial for educators to understand the unique role that higher education institutions can play in facilitating peer relationships across racial differences. More specifically, as more Latino and Black males enter higher education, it is critical for institutions to foster an environment where peer relationships can flourish.

To improve outcomes for men of color, policymakers need to understand the challenges that Black and Latino males face in college and implement policies that remove barriers and

support their matriculation and development. Research on the experiences of Black and Latino males has existed for over two decades. However, it was not until more recently that researchers began to focus their efforts on moving away from deficit-based narratives around the poor educational and social outcomes for men of color (Brooms, 2015). Consequently, researchers have recommended that colleges and universities institutionalize programs and services that can provide holistic support and improve their college completion rates (Harper & Harris, 2012). As a result, colleges and universities have implemented Male Centered Initiatives (MCIs) on college campuses. The MCIs serve many roles, such as providing socio-emotional development, creating a sense of community, and connecting students to campus. However, scholars have yet to examine how the Male Centered Initiatives facilitate intergroup relationships across racial differences.

Male Centered Initiatives

The proliferation of research on the status of men of color in higher education has resulted in many colleges and universities designing support programs designed specifically for men of color. Male Centered Initiatives are a relatively new phenomenon that picked up momentum in 2012 when President Barack Obama launched the My Brother's Keeper program. My Brother's Keepers is an initiative created to address the opportunity gap faced by boys and young men of color. It is designed to bring together cities, businesses, colleges, and foundations in an effort to improve outcomes for boys and men of color.

Due to the national attention being paid to boys and men of color, colleges and universities began to implement various forms of Male Centered Initiatives. The programs vary in terms of activities and services; however, collectively, the programs aim to improve the educational experiences for men of color and support them en route to earning their degree

(Brooms, 2016). Despite institutions directing their resources to these initiatives, very little attention has been paid to their effectiveness. Studies that have examined the experiences of students in these programs primarily focus on Black males (Barker & Avery, 2012; Brooks, Jones, & Burt, 2013; Brooms et al., 2018; Gibson, 2014).

One of the few studies on Black and Latino males in male-centered programs was conducted by Brooms, Clark, and Smith (2017). In the article "Being and Becoming Men of Character: Exploring Latino and Black Males' Brotherhood and Masculinity Through Leadership in College," the authors extrapolated data from a mixed-methods study that included ethnographic observations, surveys, and individual and group interviews at a public 4-year university. The purpose of their study was to examine the experience of Black and Latino males in a male-centered program by the name of Brothers of Excellence (BE). This particular study focused on data from a focus group with five BE student leaders. Their findings indicated that the student leaders had strong relationships with their peers, which enhanced their sense of belonging, increased their social capital, improved their sense of self, and supported their overall success. Additionally, the students identified their relationships with their peers in the program as a critical aspect of their college experience. Lastly, the study found that BE helped students to expand their definitions of masculinity and provided them with a safe space to explore their identities and learn about others while building positive relationships.

Brooms (2016) used qualitative interview data from a convenience sample of 40 Black male students across two institutions. The purpose of the study was to explore their engagement and experience in a Black male program. The data revealed that students believed the program helped them access social and cultural capital, which was an important aspect of their success in college. Furthermore, students described the program as creating a community for them that

helped them to feel more connected to the campus and their peers. As a result, students expressed feeling more welcomed, affirmed, and believed they were valued on campus. In terms of their academics, the students described the program as helping them to refocus on their performance in the classroom, and it enhanced their learning experiences by providing out-of-class learning opportunities and academic support.

Zell (2011) conducted a qualitative study on the Brother-to-Brother (B2B) program at four community colleges and two universities in Chicago. The purpose of the study was to examine students' perceptions of their educational experience and their commitment to academic achievement. Six themes were identified from the focus groups—academic motivation, personal presentation, validation of emerging skills, personal growth, an ethic of collaboration, and rewarded through accountability. The findings illuminate how B2B had a positive impact on the students' academic performance and their ability to have access to social capital that they could use to achieve their goals. More specifically, the students described B2B as helping them learn better study habits and improving time management. The student participants shared that B2B improved their self-confidence, helped them to meet college expectations, and as a result of their participation in B2B, their faculty and peers had high expectations for them.

Brooms (2019) investigated the experiences of 63 Black males who participated in a male-centered program. This study included three campuses, and data was collected using participant observations, individual interviews, and two focus groups. Brooms used a phenomenological approach and sought to expand on previous studies that have examined a sense of belonging and identity development among students of color. The author does an effective job of using a sense of belonging as a theoretical framework to understand how students made meaning of their experiences. For example, the study highlights how students

developed a sense of belonging by developing healthy peer relationships and connecting with role models (faculty and staff) in the program. The significant findings from the study suggest that the Male Centered Initiatives provided students with a unique cultural community that boosted their sense of belonging and encouraged them to matriculate through school. Collectively, studies on Male Centered Initiatives have indicated that these programs help men of color develop positive self-concepts, motivate them to excel academically, and provide them with role models and positive peer relationships.

Black and Latino Intergroup Relationships

There is scant literature specifically addressing intergroup relationships among Black and Latino college students. One relevant study conducted by Literte (2011) examined Black and Latino relations at a diverse public university in California. Literte conducted semi-structured interviews with 30 students (15 Black and 15 Latinos), and five staff and administrators. The findings showed that many Black and Latino students acknowledged that they had similar obstacles en route to their educational success on campus and socioeconomic progress in the community. However, coalition-building efforts still did not exist between the two groups. Literte (2011) argued that the lack of coalition-building efforts is due to the Black and Brown students feeling there was no threat to their welfare on campus. Additionally, Black and Brown students hold common stereotypes about one another, and conflicts in the community have permeated the campus environment. Furthermore, Black and Latinos often compete with one another over scarce resources. Literte noted that students recently had a dispute over funding for their cultural graduation ceremonies.

The findings from Literte's study are essential for two primary reasons. First, it demonstrates that Blacks and Latinos recognize their similarities, but racist ideologies and

competition for scarce resources prevent close-knit intergroup relationships from materializing, thereby nullifying coalitions. The study also points out that staff and administrators are unwilling or ill-equipped to lead efforts in facilitating intergroup relationships. Therefore, studies that examine how colleges and universities can facilitate coalition-building between the Black and Brown community would be useful.

Rocha's (2007) study entitled "Black-Brown Coalitions in Local School Board Elections" is another study that offers insight into Black and Latino intergroup relationships. Data for this study was compiled from the National Latino Education Study (NLES). The data consisted of 1,672 school boards across the United States. The findings debunked Meier and Stewarts' (1991) findings, which suggested that coalitions between Whites and Latinos are a substitute for inter-minority ones. Instead, the data suggested that high levels of immigration can result in Anglo-Black coalitions because both groups may view immigration as a threat. Rocha asserts that Latinos and Blacks can form strong coalitions when there are enough strategic incentives or structures that are in place to promote it. Rocha's findings highlight the critical role that higher educational institutions can have in providing incentives and developing structures to help facilitate intergroup relationships between men of color.

Mathers (2016) conducted a study of Latinos attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The purpose of the study was to examine instances of perceived discrimination experienced by Latinos in Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Mathers utilized a mixed-methods approach that consisted of Phinney's (1992) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure Survey and phone interviews with fifteen students. The findings indicated that Latinos who attended HBCUs felt comfortable in diverse settings. However, segregation of peer groups still existed. Latino students formed groups that focused on Hispanic culture.

Additionally, Latino and Black students both favored their racial group over other groups. Thus, Mathers (2016) argues that intergroup bias still existed and that HBCUs need to adjust to serve minority groups on campus better.

Lastly, Broad, Gonzalez, and Ball-Rokeach (2014) used Allport's (1954) contact hypotheses as a framework to explore intergroup relationships within South Los Angeles. The authors used 800 telephone surveys to assess how residents perceived relationships with one another. Their findings revealed that the frequency of interaction was the strongest predictor of positive intergroup relationships, and local storytellers (residents, community organizations, schools, and local media) are key factors in how Black and Latinos view one another. The authors argue that perceptions of intergroup relationships among Black and Latinos can improve. However, increased contact and communication appear to be critical facilitators. This study highlights the fact that a majority of the stories we hear about Black and Brown communities are focused on the adverse outcomes that arise between Black and Latinos interactions. However, this is an incomplete story because Black and Latinos have lived in harmony with one another. Furthermore, when issues exist between Blacks and Latinos, it is possible to improve relationships. There is still much to learn about positive relationships that exist between Black and Brown communities. Therefore, there is a need to examine how Black and Latinos develop intergroup relationships and make meaning of these relationships.

Summary

As student populations in higher education institutions become more racially diverse, college campuses will need to examine how to promote intergroup relationships between students of color. In places like Los Angeles, there is an immediate need to understand how to facilitate healthy relationships between Blacks and Latinos. Improving intergroup relationships

between students of color can positively impact their learning and development. For example, if students cultivate healthy intergroup relationships across racial differences in college, they are more likely to use those skills and experiences to help their communities. Facilitating positive intergroup relationships in college can foster healthy peer relationships, improve academic and social engagement, and increase retention and graduation rates for students of color. More specifically, research has demonstrated that peer relationships and programs designed specifically for men of color, improve their overall satisfaction with college, support their identity development, and enhances their social capital (Brooms et al., 2018). As more colleges and universities opt to create Male Centered Initiatives, it will be vital for them to understand how they can build a program that facilitates healthy peer relationships across racial differences.

However, current literature lacks a nuanced examination of how Black and Latino males make meaning of their relationships with one another. Few studies have investigated how Black and Latino communities form relationships with one another. Within the field of higher education, very few researchers have investigated intergroup relationships between Black and Latino college students. Therefore, this current study extends literature in the field by building on the recommendation of Strayhorn (2008), who argued for more qualitative studies that examine how males of color make meaning of their experiences in higher education. Additionally, this study responds to the call of Broad et al. (2014) to have more qualitative studies on intergroup relationships between Black and Latinos within specific social contexts. As a result, this study examines how Male Centered Initiatives help facilitate intergroup relationships across racial differences, and how Black and Latino males make meaning of their relationships with one another.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study used a phenomenological approach to understand the lived experiences of Black and Latino males who participated in a Male Centered Initiatives program designed to promote brotherhood and solidarity among men of color. This approach allowed me to challenge dominant ideologies that impeded intergroup relationships among Black and Latino males. More specifically, a critical approach allowed me to interrogate dissention between Black and Latino males and understand how men of color drown out dominant narratives about one another in an effort to establish healthy intergroup relationships. This method aligns well with the Critical Race Theory and Gender Prejudice Theory because it recognizes that males of color are more likely to be the targets and agents of racial intergroup conflict. Therefore, this study centered the voices of Black and Latino males. Additionally, the study recognized that racism is an everyday occurrence for Black and Latino males; therefore, it affects their relationships with one another.

For the purpose of this study, the following questions were addressed:

1) How do Black and Latino males develop intergroup relationships within a Male Centered Initiative at a 4-year public institution?

The following sub-questions were addressed:

2) How do Male Centered Initiatives facilitate intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males?
3) How do Black and Latino males make meaning of their relationships with one another?

Methods

Research Design

This study included one-on-one in-depth interviews with current and former participants of a Male Centered Initiatives program at a 4-year public Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) in California. The interviews took place on a college campus. To recruit participants, I used a purposive (current or former MCI participants), and convenience (students who avail themselves) sampling approach (Creswell, 2015). The interviews consisted of a 60-minute semi-structured responsive interview in a quiet location chosen by the participants. The responsive interview approach is rooted in phenomenology. It allows the researcher to gain precise data by tailoring the interview to the interviewee's needs (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Furthermore, responsive interviewing focuses on conversational dialogue to elicit concrete examples. These illustrations provide valuable insight into the participants' lived experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). By using this approach, I sought to uncover the structure of how a Male Centered Initiatives program facilitates intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males across racial differences, and how the students made meaning of their relationships with one another.

The interviews were audio-recorded, and an electronic transcribing app was used to obtain transcripts. Before analyzing the interviews, I engaged in Epoché and Bracketing. I took note of my assumptions (understandings, judgments, and experiences) about the topic. I then bracketed my assumptions and examined them to understand better how my biases may affect my research.

To analyze the interviews, NVivo qualitative data analysis software was utilized. along with a conventional data analysis approach consisting of eight steps (Creswell, 2015). NVivo was first used to create a separate document for each interview. Each document had a header that

indicated the pseudonym of the participant, the date of the interview, and the location of the interview. Additionally, each document had two columns. The column on the left margin had a header labeled "codes," and the column on the right margin of the page had a header labeled "themes." Secondly, I read through the transcripts several times and made notes of significant statements.

In the third phase of the data analyses, the data were coded. In my first iteration of coding, I used what Creswell (2015) refers to as lean coding whereas I coded large chunks of data, such as paragraphs. During this phase of coding, 20 to 30 codes were created using In Vivo codes, which allowed me to use the exact words of my participants to build codes and themes. During step four of the data analysis, Nvivo software was used to list all of the codes identified codes, which allowed me to review them to identify overlaps. Analytic memos were also made regarding the codes. After the codes were listed, I began step five. During this phase, the codes were grouped into broader themes. In my notes, I listed tentative themes and made a note of significant strategies and structures that lead to students developing intergroup relationships across racial differences. In step six, I used the codes to write a theme passage. The theme passages served as a tentative write-up of a theme. Each passage included an In Vivo theme label, and a short quote from the participants. During step seven, a conceptual map of the themes was created. This process helped to clarify how the different themes tied together to tell a story. Lastly, in step eight of the data analysis, a narrative story was developed. The concept map was used to help organize the themes to ensure the flow and provide a logical flow of the data.

Instrumentation

An interview protocol was used to collect data for this study (Appendix A and B). The interview protocol allowed me to collect valuable data at the beginning of each interview (see

Table 3.1). The interviews with students and alumni consisted of 15 interview questions. The questions sought to uncover how the Male Centered Initiatives program supported intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males, and how the students made meaning of these relationships. To ensure the interview protocol was effective in uncovering the essence of participants' experiences, the first draft of the student interview protocol went through a process of peer checking. To conduct peer checking, a mock interview was facilitated with a colleague. After the mock interview, my colleague gave me direct feedback on the interview protocol. As a result of the feedback, I revised the protocol and conducted pilot interviews with six students who had participated in a male-centered initiatives program at a 4-year public university. At the end of the interviews, I made further edits to the interview protocol to ensure appropriate data would be gleaned during this study. The pilot interview took place in a quiet office on a college campus.

Table 3.1

Demographic Information Sample

Name	
Pseudonym	
Race (Circle One)	Black/African American Latino
Class standing	Freshmen Sophomore Junior Senior
Number of years in college	
Major	
Number of Years in MCI Program	
Were you admitted to campus as a Freshmen or Transfer?	
Name of the high school you graduated from?	
High school GPA (circle one)	2.0 or below; 2.1- 2.5; 2.6 – 3.0; 3.1 – 3.5; 3.6 – 4.0; 4.1 or above
Are you a first-generation college student?	

Data Collection

A qualitative research method was utilized to examine how Black and Latino males establish intergroup relationships across racial differences. This study lent itself to qualitative methods because it sought to uncover the essence of intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males. Thus, qualitative methods are useful because they center on the voices and experiences of individuals who often go overlooked in research (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Additionally, a qualitative approach allowed me to explore this phenomenon from multiple perspectives, which often leads to useful solutions.

This study collected data from face-to-face, one-on-one interviews. Data from this study were collected at South Bay State University (SBSU) (Pseudonym), which is a Hispanic-Serving Institution in Los Angeles, California with an established Male Centered Initiatives program on campus. To obtain permission to conduct my study, I worked with the campus to get IRB approval. Additionally, I obtained approval to recruit a total of 20 participants (10 Black and 10 Latino) for the study. Before the interviews began, I read through an informed consent form (Appendix C) with each participant and asked them to sign it if they wanted to participate in the study.

To recruit participants for the study, I used a purposive sampling approach. Emails were sent to potential candidates (Appendix D & E) inviting them to participate in the study. Students who participated in the study had to meet the following criteria: current or former members in the campus's Male Centered Initiatives program for a minimum of one academic year, identify as a Latino male or African American male, graduated from a high school in Los Angeles County, and currently enrolled in college or graduated from college within the last 4 years. The one-year participation requirement ensured that participants in the study did not have their

responses limited due to having spent a minimal amount of time in the program. Participants received a $10 gift card as compensation.

Reflexivity

As a Black male, my personal and professional experiences inform my position in this study. I have experienced the challenges and benefits of establishing intergroup relationships with men of color across racial differences. Also, I have worked with men of color for 12 years in various settings. Therefore, I have witnessed multiple interactions between Black and Latino males in diverse contexts. To recognize how my personal and professional experiences impacted this study, I engaged in the process of Epoché and Bracketing. More specifically, I identified and reflected on my pre-conceptions and become aware of how I may perceive the dynamics between participants in the study.

My personal and professional identity positioned me as an insider with the students in this study. I recognized that typically when interviewing Latino male participants, I would be considered an outsider in regards to race. Especially since I would be asking them questions about their experiences with individuals from a community that I identify with (Black males). However, I have worked with the MCI program at South Bay State University for 8 years. During this time, the students and I have had a variety of vulnerable conversations. In these conversations, we have covered a wide range of topics such as fatherhood, racism, relationships, gender identity, sexual identity, and the benefits of going to counseling. As a result, my transparent and trusting relationship with students helped to facilitate honest dialogue about a topic that is often difficult to discuss.

Protection of Human Subjects

Prior to collecting data, I obtained IRB approval and received feedback and approval from the Director of the Male Centered Initiatives program. During the data collection process, I read through the informed consent form with participants, and informed them that their participation in the study was voluntary, and they could withdraw anytime without penalty. Also, I discussed the purpose of the study and how the data would be used. Pseudonyms were given to each participant, and interview transcripts were confidentially maintained in a locked file cabinet in my home office.

Interview and Coding

In order to ensure my interview protocol yielded appropriate data, pilot interviews were conducted with Black and Latino males who participated in a Male Centered Initiatives program at a 4-year public university. The pilot interviews took place in the summer of 2019. The semi-structured interviews took place on a college campus in a quiet office. The interview was transcribed using an electronic transcription application. Once I received the transcribed data, I read through the interviews multiple times to check for accuracy. During my second read of the interview transcripts, I wrote notes in the margins about significant statements or findings. I then went through and used In Vivo coding to code the interview transcripts. Lastly, I re-coded the transcripts using a structural coding process while making analytical memo notes. The following questions were used to guide our discussion during the pilot interviews:

1) Tell me about the schools you attended (elementary, jr. high, high school).

a. Probe: What were the school's demographics?

2) While you were growing up, what messages did you receive about Black/Latino males?

a. Probe: Who did you receive the messages from?

b. Probe: Were messages received multiple times? Or was it just once?

c. Probe: What did you think about those messages?

3) While growing up, what were your families (immediate and extended) attitudes toward Black/Latino males?

4) Please describe any interaction you had with your Black/Latino male peers during your K-12 experience.

a. Probe: Specify elementary, jr. high, and high school.

b. Probe: If they describe having friends of another race: How often did you see each other? What did you speak about?

5) As you went through your K-12 experience, what thoughts did you have about developing relationships with Black/Latino males?

a. Probe: How, if at all, have your thoughts about developing relationships with Latino/Black males changed over time?

b. Probe: What would you say influenced this change in your thoughts?

6) Why did you choose this university?

7) Tell me about your college experiences so far.

8) Why did you join the Male Centered Initiatives program on campus?

a. Probe: How would you describe your experience in the MCIs?

9) In what ways have you developed relationships with Latino/Black males in the program?

a. Probe: Are the relationships you developed with Latino/Black males in the program different than those you have established with Latin/Black males who are not in the program?

10) How would you describe your relationship with Black/Latino males in the program?

11) The program emphasizes brotherhood, what does it mean to have a Latino/Black who is considered a brother?
12) What has helped you develop relationships with Black/Latino males in the program?
13) What are your thoughts on relationships between Black and Latino males?
14) Is there anything else about Latino/Black male connections or relationships that you would like to share?
15) Is there anything else I did not ask about that you would like to share with me?

The process of conducting the pilot interviews revealed two findings that improved the research design. First, the interview protocol was too repetitive, and it did not adequately answer the research questions. Therefore, I revised questions and outlined how each interview question would answer at least one research question. The changes in interview questions were made to ensure the answers aligned more with the study's research questions and theoretical frameworks. Below is an overview of questions that were changed.

- Added Question 5 in Appendix A: "While you were growing up, did you or anyone you were close with, experience hostility or aggression from a member of the Black/Latino community because of your race? If yes, please describe what happened. If no, why do you think this was never an issue?"

  Probe: Was the aggressor a male?

  Probe: How did this experience make you feel?
- Deleted Question 9 in the original interview protocol.
- Revised Question 11 in the original interview protocol to now read: "The program emphasizes brotherhood; how does the program promote brotherhood between its members?"

Probe: What does it mean to have a Latino/Black male who is considered a brother?

- Revised Question 12 in the original interview protocol to now read: "What specific things does the program do to help participants develop relationships across racial differences?
- Deleted Question 13 on the original interview protocol.
- Added Question 13 in Appendix A, "If someone were to ask you how their Male Centered Initiative could help facilitate relationships between Black and Latino males, what advice would you give?"

Outlined below is a representation of how each question from the protocol attempts to answer a particular research question.

Research Question #1: How do Black and Latino males develop intergroup relationships within a Male Centered Initiatives program at a 4-year public institution?

- The program emphasizes brotherhood, how does the program promote brotherhood?
  Probe: What does it mean to have a Latino/Black male who is considered a brother?
- What specific things does the program do to help participants develop relationships across racial differences?
- If someone were to ask you how their Male Centered Initiative could help facilitate relationships between Black and Latino males, what advice would you give?

Research Question #2: How do Black and Latino males make meaning of their relationships with one another?

- While you were growing up, what messages did you receive about Black/Latino males?
- While growing up, what were your families (immediate and extended) attitudes toward Black/Latino males?

- Please describe any interaction you had with your Black/Latino male peers during your K-12 experience.
- While you were growing up, did you or anyone you were close with, experience hostility or aggression from a member of the Black/Latino community because of your race?
- How would you describe your relationship with Black/Latino males in the program?

Research Question #3: How do Male Centered Initiatives facilitate intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males?

- The program emphasizes brotherhood, how does the program promote brotherhood? **Probe:** What does it mean to have a Latino/Black male who is considered a brother?
- What specific things does the program do to help participants develop relationships across racial differences?
- If someone were to ask you how their Male Centered Initiative could help facilitate relationships between Black and Latino males, what advice would you give?

Research Question #4: In what ways do relationships across racial differences matter to Black and Latino males?

- Please describe any interaction you had with your Black/Latino male peers during your K-12 experience.
- While you were growing up, did you or anyone you were close with, experience hostility or aggression from a member of the Black/Latino community because of your race?
- As you went through your K-12 experience, what thoughts did you have about developing relationships with Black/Latino males?
- Why did you join the Male Centered Initiatives program on campus?
- How would you describe your relationship with Black/Latino males in the program?

- The program emphasizes brotherhood, how does the program promote brotherhood?

  Probe: What does it mean to have a Latino/Black male who is considered a brother?

- If someone were to ask you how their Male Centered Initiative could help facilitate relationships between Black and Latino males, what advice would you give?

Another change that was made after the pilot interviews were to split the questions into two major sections—K-12 Experiences, and College Experiences. I believed that this would help the participants understand the order of questions and provide robust responses.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS/RESULTS

This chapter presents data collected from 20 one-on-one responsive interviews with Black and Latino males who participated in a Male Centered Initiatives program at a 4-year public university in Los Angeles, California. This study sought to answer the following research questions: (1) How do Black and Latino males develop intergroup relationships within a male-centered initiative at a 4-year public institution? (2) How do male-centered initiatives facilitate intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males? and (3) How do Black and Latino males make meaning of their relationships with one another? The first and second research questions are answered by examining the responses offered by participants as they reflected on the role that the Brothers of Excellence (BE) program played in helping them to develop relationships with their out-group peers. The third research question is answered by analyzing the participants' descriptions of how they have made meaning of previous interactions with out-group males, and how and why developing relationships across racial differences in BE matters.

In analyzing the data, the themes from my findings were used to divide the chapter into three significant sections. The themes are organized in chronological order because childhood experiences play a critical role in the development of intergroup relationships (Lee, Quinn, & Heyman, 2017). The themes that emerged from the data are "K-12 Experiences," "College Experiences," and "Reflections on Intergroup Relationships." The first theme, "K-12 Experiences," provide answers to the third research question, which reveals how students made meaning of their relationships with out-group males during their K-12 experiences. It also provides insight into how students perceived and experienced relationships with their Black and Brown male peers before joining the BE program. This insight contextualizes the narratives that

participants offered about how they developed relationships across racial differences in college. The second theme covered is "College Experiences." This section of the chapter presents findings related to research questions one and two by offering a thorough analysis of how Black and Latino males developed relationships with one another. The final theme, "Reflections on Intergroup Relationships," documents how the Black and Latino male participants now make meaning of their relationships across racial differences. This theme provides further insight into research question three by shining light on why the bonds developed in the Brothers of Excellence program matter to the men in this study.

K–12 Experiences

This study consisted of 20 interviews with ten Black males and ten Latino males. I conducted 14 interviews (7 Black and 7 Latino) with undergraduate students, and six interviews with alumni (3 Black and 3 Latino). A majority of the participants in this study grew up in three geographic areas within Los Angeles County. The areas consisted of South-Central Los Angeles, South Bay of Los Angeles, and East Los Angeles. As Table 4.1 portrays, 80% of the participants in this study were first-generation college students. Additionally, 11 of the 14 undergraduate students were classified as upper-division students (juniors or seniors).

Over 50% of the participants described growing up in communities and attending predominantly Latino schools. Slightly more than 30% of the participants grew up in communities and attended K-12 schools that had about an equal distribution of Black and Latino students but had very few students from other racial and ethnic backgrounds. Lastly, 10% of the participants grew up in a community and attended a school that had a diverse school setting mixed with various racial and ethnic groups.

Table 4.1

Participant Demographics

Name	Race	Status	First Generation Student	Major
Gabriel	Latino	Senior	Yes	Chicana/o Studies
Antonio	Latino	Senior	Yes	Psychology
Jonathon	Black	Senior	No	Chemistry
Edgar	Latino	Sophomore	Yes	Kinesiology
Isaac	Latino	Senior	Yes	Chicana/o Studies
Dennis	Black	Sophomore	Yes	Computer Science
Donald	Black	Senior	Yes	Psychology
Jeffrey	Black	Sophomore	No	Business Marketing
Mike	Latino	Junior	Yes	Theatre Arts
Jack	Black	Alumnus	Yes	Psychology
Malcolm	Black	Senior	No	Africana Studies
Raheem	Black	Junior	Yes	Business Marketing
Pelotero	Latino	Junior	Yes	Kinesiology
Junior	Latino	Senior	Yes	Criminal Justice
Dahr	Black	Junior	Yes	Biology
Andre	Black	Alumnus	Yes	Sociology
Colin	Latino	Alumnus	Yes	Biology
Felipe	Latino	Alumnus	Yes	Sociology
Eric	Black	Alumnus	No	Biology
Diego	Latino	Alumnus	Yes	Psychology

The composition of their schools and home communities played an essential role in their exposure to Black or Latino peers. Five of the Latino participants grew up in an ethnic enclave where the community had a super-majority (greater than 70%) of Latinos. This limited their exposure to Black male peers. For example, Edgar, a Latino student who lived in and went to school in an ethnic enclave, did not have a Black male peer relationship until his senior year of high school. He shared:

> It wasn't until my senior year in high school when there was [a black male] this football player; he actually came in, and he started playing football and stuff, and I was still part of the team, but I wasn't playing. So, we really built a connection. Even though, as I was a small kid, they told me like, "Oh yeah, we have issues [with black people]."

Prior to his senior year, Edgar's only experience with the Black community, and Black males, in particular, came from messages he received from family, peers, and media. Like other students in this study, Edgar's early interactions with outgroup males were clouded by messages they received from others about what to expect from Black and Brown relationships. Junior, a Latino student who also grew up in a Latino ethnic enclave, recalled that he did not begin interacting with Black members of the community until he was in seventh grade working at a butcher shop.

> …once I started working in South Central, that's where the butcher shop was at, in South Central, I started meeting a lot of Black people. It's predominantly, well, I would say 60% Latino and 40% Black. Like I said, in middle school, there were only like five Black kids in my whole couple of thousand graduating year. It was like 2,000 kids in my graduating year. It was probably like five of them Black.

Junior was taken out of school in seventh grade due to his behavior. As a result, his father made him work in a butcher shop, which is where he first began to interact with Black community members. Junior and Edgar's narratives speak to the experiences of students in this study who grew up in ethnic enclaves. These students did not have relationships with outgroup males until later in their schooling experience.

For the participants who grew up in more of a diverse setting, they had early exposure to Black and Latino community members. This early exposure often resulted in friendships being developed. For instance, Dennis, a Black student who grew up in a diverse setting, described how everyone at his elementary school was willing to hang out with one another:

> I really had a lot of friends, everybody was just really friendly. Everybody wanted to hang out, everybody wanted to kick it... It was all real good. In Elementary, everybody was, "Ay, come sit with me." I had real connections with a lot of people and was like, "Hey, let's hang out. At lunch, sit at my table." "Let's all play together," because we were all trying to have fun. "Y'all want to play kickball?" "Oh yeah, let's go play kickball." "Y'all want to race?" "Let's race."

Similarly, Antonio, a Latino undergraduate student who grew up in a diverse environment, reflected on the relationship he had with a Black male in elementary school. He stated:

> There was a best friend I had named Keveon. We were playing basketball, and we had the same interests. I was a Laker fan; he was a Laker fan. At the time, my hero was Shaq, an African-American man. And we just started vibing, and I think we just had stuff in common. He exposed me to the music his parents exposed him to, which is R&B. He introduced me to Usher and all these artists that they

listened to. We just connected from the start. I taught him stuff; he taught me stuff.

Andre, a Black alumnus, attended a school comprised of Black and Latino students. He described a friendship he formed with Miguel, who was a Latino male he met after transferring from an elementary school where Black and Brown conflicts were prevalent. He shared:

> We just happened to have each semester together, and so we just followed each other and always ended up sitting next to each other. We grew closer. He used to draw. I used to draw too during that time. It was a transition for me having to leave Franklin Elementary to go to Laurel Street Elementary. So, he was welcoming. He was into basketball, and he lived where I lived. So, we were able to walk to school together and stuff like that. It was little micro-experiences in the classroom that we were able to share, and then being able to walk from school…from home to school, and then school to home, and have conversations, and just talk. We talked about how many points we had at lunch and stuff like that. Man, it was cool. We would talk about Pokemon ... so, I think I began to move beyond the threshold of like, "This is a Mexican." This was my classmate, my homie, and it was cool, man. Long story short, man, he is actually the godfather of my daughter, now. We met when we were seven, and he now is the godfather of my daughter.

The relationship that the student participants had with outgroup males early in their academic careers left an indelible impression on them. Many of these relationships were formed due to what Andre described as "micro-experiences." These were multiple interactions that

participants had with outgroup males that allowed them to bond around similar interests, backgrounds, and goals. The accumulation of these interactions led to students developing intergroup relationships across racial differences. Collectively, a majority of the participants in this study described having these experiences early in their academic experience. What Andre described as micro-experiences compliments previous literature that suggests Black and Latino males can improve intergroup relationships if the proper structures are developed, and they have increased interaction and communication (Broad et al., 2014; Rocha, 2007). However, Andre and other participants in this study extend this literature by providing a detailed description of the type of structure and interaction needed to develop relationships across racial differences. The participants in this study described engaging with their outgroup peers multiple times outside of structured school activities. The time they spent together allowed them to converse about similar interests and experiences. The narratives in this study revealed that "micro-experiences" were pivotal interactions that helped students see beyond their racial differences and connect on similar interests and passions.

Antonio's description of his friendship with Keveon is an example of the bond that students developed with outgroup males as a result of sharing micro-experiences with their peers. Early in their academic careers, students were able to develop intergroup relationships due to common interests. As Dennis shared, at this stage of their development, their passions revolved around being in community with one another, and having fun. When students were able to identify similar interests as their outgroup peers, the differences between them were used as tools to teach one another rather than issues to divide them. Antonio speaks directly to this when he stated that he and Keveon began to teach each other about their culture.

A majority of the participants in this study articulated that they were able to develop a connection with outgroup males early in their academic experiences. Early in their lives, they developed intergroup relationships across racial differences. These relationships seemed to form due to two reasons. First, students shared a variety of micro-experiences with one another, which led to long-term friendships. Secondly, the students connected to the things they had in common such as growing up in the same neighborhoods and communities, similar interests in hobbies and activities, and having similar desires for what they wanted at this point in their life (community and play). As a result, students developed bonds with each other and interacted inside and outside of the classroom. Developing intergroup relationships in early childhood can help prevent children from developing out-group biases (Skinner & Meltzoff, 2019). However, as will be discussed from the relationship with Andre and Miguel, the social and political context of their communities often impacted their relationships and, at times, created difficulty.

We may have to view each other as enemies. The participants in this study explained that their friendships with outgroup male peers changed as they progressed through their K-12 years. For a majority of the participants in this study, as they matured, they received negative messages from family and peers about outgroup males. These messages typically consisted of stereotypes and comments meant to sow seeds of fear and distrust. Pelotero, a Latino undergraduate student who grew up in an ethnic enclave, recalled the messages he learned from his brothers. He shared:

> Growing up, since my brothers were a part of gangs out here in South Central by the Colosseum, I was raised to believe we don't get along with them [Black people] …but growing up, the perception was always stereotyping. They were

like, “They're unorganized. They're just taking over certain funds [welfare],” and stuff like that.

Similarly, Isaac, a Latino student who grew up in a diverse neighborhood, stated:

> The conversation in my family was always, “Protect yourself from Black people.” That was always the narrative. I'd say anti-blackness was really prevalent, and I think it still is, and it's still this idea that Black equals criminal that I think is still present. So, that's what I would hear constantly. “Oh, be careful.”

Additionally, Colin, a Latino alumnus, said, “The way they [grandparents] would scare us as if we were in public and we were acting up; they'd be like, ‘Behave or that Black man is going to take you.’”

Similar to the other Latino students in this study, Pelotero, Isaac, and Colin offered specific examples of demeaning messages they received about the Black community from family members. These messages degraded the Black community and situated them as being inferior. The consistent messaging from their family created a wedge between them and their Black male peers. For example, in my interview with Colin, he claimed that because his grandparents repeatedly told them that Black men would take them from their family if they behaved in ways that were not approved, he and his siblings developed a fear of Black males.

The negative messages that participants received about the Black community were rooted in White supremacy. As Isaac reflected on what he experienced, he labeled the ideology within his family as “anti-Blackness.” Moreover, Isaac shared that anti-Blackness is something his family still embraces. Like Isaac, many of the students in this study were raised in environments where anti-Blackness was present and openly taught.

As a result, this teaching and socialization caused a strain on their relationships with Black male peers. As I spoke with Isaac, he reflected on how anti-Blackness affected a close friendship he had with a Black male who ended up going to prison.

> I tell other people this, and it's been one of the things that have to this day affected me emotionally and psychologically, losing my best homie, my best friend to gang life. I mean, he was my Black homie who I first brought into my house. Having him be locked up for life type of thing, I think that, it just ... I haven't been able to process it. It happened my first semester here…so, it's been this thing where it hurts, right? So, even to hear things in my family, even if it slips from my family… I think sometimes anti-Blackness is so ingrained they kind of don't think about it and just kind of say things sometimes. But even then, it's really hurtful to hear these messages because I still haven't been able to process what's been going on, what happened to him. So, it brings a lot of, I guess, guilt, right? Because yes, I'm a brown male. I'm a lighter brown male. But, it's also, I was able to come to the institution and be in academia.

Despite growing up around anti-Black sentiments, Isaac was able to form a strong bond with a Black male peer in high school. This was the first Black friend Isaac ever took to his home. Unfortunately, this friend went to prison due to his involvement with a gang. Due to their close relationship, Isaac was extremely hurt when his friend went to prison. This pain is further exasperated by his family's anti-Black statements. Isaac's relationship with a Black male peer caused him to be more sensitive and aware of the negative framing of the Black community. Isaac describes his family's anti-Blackness as causing a triggering effect because the statements might apply to his friend. This creates a

painful paradox for Isaac as it seems like his family's attitudes are affirmed by his friend's situation. However, Isaac's experiences and close bonding relationship with this individual allow him to see his friend as more than a deviant gang member; instead, he holds a more robust view of his peer. Isaac is left with an internal dilemma as he tries to process his guilt of being in college while one of his best friends is in prison. Isaac went on to describe how his family's anti-Blackness impacted him.

> I think it just bothers me when I hear things from family, even when they're extended family. It's just ... it's been weird. It's also been a process of me checking my own anti-Blackness. I think when he was locked up, I was really angry at gangs, right…for existing. So, I saw some of myself going back into that space of fog, like Black people are this or that. And there's also been the journey of doing that work, you know what I mean? Of just checking myself on a regular basis. What am I doing that permeates, like I say, anti-Black sentiments, you know what I mean?

In his pain and anger, Isaac realizes he is having anti-Black thoughts ("black people are this or that"). He describes this as "going back into that space of fog." The pain and anger led him to retreat to the lessons he learned from his family about what Black people are and why they should not be embraced. As a result, Isaac shared that he went on a journey of "doing that work." Meaning, he had to begin to process and challenge the messages he received. This self-examination is a process that many of the students describe needing to go through. If deep, meaningful connections are going to be developed with outgroup males, then individuals must interrogate the things they have learned about outgroup males, and understand how different situations can trigger negative sentiments.

Throughout this study, the Latino participants described how they received negative messages about Black males multiple times and most prominently from different family members. Thus, it was not a single occurrence but repetitive messages they received from individuals they trusted and loved. Similar to Isaac's statements, other Latino males in this study contributed to anti-Black ideology in the Latino community to White supremacy and colorism. This finding confirms previous literature that described anti-Black sentiments in the Latino community as being rooted in White supremacy (Haywood, 2017; McClain et al., 2006).

The peddling of anti-Blackness placed many of the participants in a Black and Brown paradox. Early in their K-12 years, many of the students had positive interactions with their Black male peers and saw that the Black and Brown community had a lot in common. For example, they lived in the same community, attended the same schools, experienced similar struggles, and had similar interests. However, as they matured, they began to hear messages that contradicted their early childhood experiences and highlighted differences between Blacks and Latinos. For many of the participants in this study, these messages caused them to develop shallow relationships with Black males.

For Black students in this study, the messages they received from family typically positioned the Latino community as monopolizing scarce resources. For example, Donald, a Black undergraduate, attended a diverse school, and he described the distinction his parents drew between Black and Brown kids in his school.

> I remember I went to a parent-teacher conference, and we saw one of the teachers pull the Latino parents to the side. And the teacher was really instilling in them why they need to do better and just really trying to get them to really step up their

> academics. And I remember my parents referenced this. They said teachers really put an emphasis on Latinos getting their education. Whereas for Black students, they don't put the same emphasis. So, as a Black student, you have to really push as much if not more, to get your education compared to other students. In general, for Latinos and other students, it's instilled by the teacher. But they might not pull you [Black students] to the side or put that extra effort into getting you to understand. So, it's on you to make it a priority for you to learn.

Andre offered another example when he reflected on what he heard from his father:

> So, yeah. My dad, at an early age, man, I can remember around six or seven years old, my dad was saying and telling me to learn Spanish, like, "You need to learn Spanish. You need to learn Spanish…he saw the shift of the climate in Compton, and the stakeholders in Compton, including those who have the jobs.…They're taking all the jobs. Look at the billboard," We'd be driving, and he'd say, "Look at the billboard. It's in Spanish."

Lastly, Jack, a Black alumnus, discussed what he learned from his peers in school. He stated:

> Now it's been decades but the initial conversation of how Mexicans specifically were coming to the United States as immigrants…stealing jobs and making life harder for Americans. I, unfortunately, really fed into that. I think a lot of it has to do with the high school and all the interactions I had with folks because that was honestly my philosophy. I thought Latino males were like all immigrants. They were all coming from a space where they were trying to, in fact, steal opportunities from Americans. I fed into this philosophy of I know it's hard to be

> Black, and I know Black men struggle to get jobs. So, it's probably the Latino males' fault.

Similarly, other students recalled receiving messages about Latinos getting preferential treatment in school and the workforce. The underlying message was that the increase in opportunities for Latinos meant a decrease in opportunities for the Black community. As previous literature suggests, the anti-Latino messages peddled in the Black community were rooted in White Supremacy, which frames Latinos as foreign invaders taking jobs and opportunities from "true Americans" (Broad et al., 2014; Gay, 2006; Roig-Franzia, 2006). In this case, it was used to argue that Black struggles in America are truly the consequence of immigration from Latin America and not systemic racism that has disenfranchised Black people in America for centuries. The peddling of this ideology pitted the Black males in this study against their Latino peers in a fight for scarce resources in under-served communities.

Moreover, Black students in this study described peers as being their primary teacher of the Black and Brown conflict. Latino males were typically framed as the enemy to Black males. As a result, many of the participants described feeling pressure to choose sides. For instance, Malcolm stated:

> In high school, it definitely sort of amped up in terms of having friends who are Black who absolutely were sort of, you know, enemies with Latino students. And I ultimately had to pick. Okay, do I stick with my friends who are Black and not necessarily endorse their hostility towards Latino students? But there was no straddling the fence there, you know.

Andre reflected on his time in an elementary that had a Black and Brown conflict and said,

> It's interesting, man, because I felt some pressure, but I didn't realize it was pressure. It just felt like it was a rite of passage in a sense. It was something I had to do. My brothers treaded this water before me because they also went to Franklin Elementary, as well. I was like, "This is what I have to go through while I'm here."

The Black students described the conflict with Latinos as being an act of solidarity with their Black male peers. Andre described it as a rites passage. Like other students in this study, Malcolm and Andre recalled feeling more connected with their Black male peers during times of conflict with Latino males. They felt pressure to choose sides. Participants described choosing their Black male peers as a means of survival and solidarity. Similar to the anti-Black sentiments expressed by Latinos, the anti-Latino sentiments also were rooted in White Supremacy. For the Black participants in this study, their conflict with Latinos was shaped by messages of Latinos invading historically Black neighborhoods and usurping resources. As a result, the majority of participants described their relationships with Latinos as developing into mere acquaintances as they got older.

Prison politics. The majority of students in this study attributed the negative messages they received about outgroup males to gangs and prison politics. Students shared that they had family members or friends who were in gangs and spent time in jail. Participants also described the influence that gangs had in their community. This influence played a central role in socializing the men in this study. For instance, Dahr, a Black male, described how his father was involved with gangs in Los Angeles. As a result, he taught him about the Black and Brown issues.

> I had a lot of family members that were brought up in gangs and from the same place in Compton. So, the tension was like really already there. Just some of the stories that my dad told me about going to South Central High School. How bad it was, gang rivalries [between Black and Latino gangs], just how things were back then. So, I could say that the tension was there already.

Dahr's comments speak to the lived experiences of the men in this study. As Dahr describes, tensions between the Black and Latino community existed before he was born. Some of the participants in this study described Black and Latino conflict as something they inherited from their community.

Raheem, a Black undergraduate, recalled how the gang influence in his neighborhood taught him about the violence between Blacks and Latinos, which altered the way he navigated his community.

> Even with gangs, I had friends that were part of Mexican gangs and back when I was young. I remember they had to bring a mauled Black person for gang initiation; some still do to this day. In certain communities, Long Beach, east side LA, there's certain places I can't walk through because they see me as…well, you know.

In my conversations with Dahr and Raheem, they both claimed that the conflict between Black and Latino gangs played a critical role in shaping Black and Brown relationships in their community. In situations like those described by Dahr, individuals learn about conflict and violence between Black and Latino gangs from family members. Whereas, with Raheem, he learned about the conflict between Black and Latino gangs from peers who were involved in gangs. Regardless of how participants learned about

Black and Latino gang conflict, they often described needing to know this information as a means of survival. As Raheem described, as a Black man, there were certain neighborhoods he could not walk through due to safety concerns.

Participants in this study believed that prison influenced how their family members and peers viewed outgroup males as well. They described gangs being influenced by what is taught in prison. For example, Gabriel reflected on the messages he received from his uncles.

> I received those messages from my uncles because they were in prison, and they said the only people you can trust are your race. And I didn't know what he meant, but he would say, “You can't hang around with this Black person or you can’t be around him because you'll get checked.” I didn't quite understand at that age, but as I grew and went to transition into high school, I guess I understood what he meant. They were telling me about gang politics. In a sense, they had this mentality where they were still stuck in prison even though they were out, but they were still trying to put it on us.

In my conversation with Gabriel, he recalled struggling to understand what his uncles were telling him because it contrasted with his early interactions with Black male peers. Nevertheless, as he matured, he realized his uncles were teaching him prison politics. He believed this mentality was heavily influenced by their time in prison. As he made meaning of this in our interview, Gabriel described his uncles as being physically free from prison but psychologically confined to the mentality they developed while behind bars. Gabriel went on to discuss how this impacted his relationships with Black male peers.

> When I reflect back, I didn't have many Black friends because of that. I don't know, like the majority of the time, I wouldn't interact with Black folks because of the things my uncles would tell me, and then I had to just stick to, I guess, the Mexicans. Plus, the majority of the time, because I was gang-affiliated, there was always a tension between Black and Brown folks.

Like Gabriel, many of the participants shared that the messages they received about outgroup males created a rift between Black and Latino male peers. As a result, many of the participants described having shallow relationships with outgroup male peers in high school. For example, Dennis reflected on his relationship with Latino males in high school.

> Honestly, they weren't prominent. They were there, but they weren't prominent. As the majority of friends that I made were either Black males, Black women, or Latinas. As those were who I just navigated towards. I don't know why. I often did make friends with them, but it was like acquaintance-level friends. Like, I see you, we'll speak and all that, but not hang out with you.

For Dennis, relationships with Latino males did not seem to come naturally. Although he attended school with them, they remained acquaintances as opposed to having a close friendship with his Latino male peers. In my conversation with Dennis, he mentioned that conflict between Black and Latino males prevented him from having a desire to develop intergroup relationships with Latino males. Similarly, the other participants in this study described feeling isolated from outgroup male peers or only having superficial relationships with outgroup male peers. Furthermore, the segregation between Black and Latino males was reinforced by the violence between the two communities.

Black and Latino violence. In addition to receiving negative messages from family members and peers regarding outgroup males, over 70% of the students in this study reported witnessing violence between Black and Latino community members. This violence manifested through Black and Latino race riots in their schools, or they were either directly or indirectly involved in a racially-motivated fight with an outgroup male. These acts of violence seemed to reaffirm ideas that outgroup males are enemies and should be feared. This motivated students to stick to their own racial group and ethnic group. Nevertheless, this created a difficult situation for many of the participants in this study. Throughout the interviews, they described their internal battles with framing outgroup males as enemies. An example of the inner turmoil caused by these conditions may best be exemplified by the relationship between Andre and Miguel. As you may recall, earlier in the chapter, Andre described how he and Miguel became friends at the age of seven. Today, Miguel is the godfather to Andre's daughter. However, due to the Black and Brown conflict, they went through high school without speaking to each other. Andre reflected on race riots at his high school and stated:

> All the time, we had riots, I used to look for him [Miguel], make sure I'm not punching on him. He was nowhere to be found. You know what I'm saying? So crazy. I used to really look for him, like, "Where Miguel at?" I always thought, what would I do if I saw him in that crowd, though? If I saw him getting punched on by one of my Black homies, would I go and diffuse it? Or what position would I be in, and how would I navigate that? Because this was someone that I shared experiences with, ate at his mom and dad's table, went to his grandpa's birthday party, went to plenty of his birthday parties, you know what I'm saying? I went to go support him when he had baseball games in middle school, and all these years

> later, he's running with a different crowd. I'm moving and shaking. But we have situations where we may have to view each other as enemies. Well, I may have to at least act that way, that you're not my friend, or never was…it was heartbreaking. So, man, I'm very thankful that I was never in that position, but psychologically that would mess with me.

Andre describes the inner turmoil he experienced with each race riot at his school. He feared he would end up in a position where he might accidentally hit his childhood friend or see one of his other friends assaulting him. This placed him in a difficult situation. As he reflected on that time, Andre recalled thinking about what he would do if he ever ended up in that situation. Andre's micro-experiences with Miguel resulted in them forming an everlasting bond. However, as Andre described, the two lived in an environment where they did not feel they could express their love for each other. Instead, they had to act as if they were not friends, and as Andre put it, they had never been friends. Nevertheless, behind this charade, Andre worried about his friend and thought about what the cost would be to defend him if needed.

For the participants in this study, the Black and Brown violence in their community caused stress and trauma. Like many of the students in this study, Andre described it as heartbreaking and causing emotional distress. The participants in this study described the combination of negative messages, isolation from outgroup males, and violence as traumatic and stressful. As they reflected on the incidents that took place, many of the participants articulated the pain it caused them and became visibly upset about what they experienced. The trauma and emotional distress that Black and Latino males experience can have detrimental effects on their health and relationships (Graham-Bailey et al., 2018; Rich, 2016; Van Thompson & Schwartz, 2014). As previously noted, there is much we can learn from the story of Andre and Miguel.

Andre went on to describe how he and Miguel rekindled their friendship at the end of their senior year in high school.

> Long story short, when it was time to walk across that stage, and we had grad night and everything, we went to Disneyland, and we rode on the same bus. So, we chopped it up, that whole bus ride, man. It was so crazy because that was really our first conversation that whole senior year. We really just sat down and was just like, "So, what's next? How's the family? What's going on?" It was just cool, man. It was really cool. That's what put us back into gear of just rekindling and re-establishing our friendship. Ever since I graduated from high school, we just stayed close.

Andre's reconciliation with Miguel took place because the young men were able to find a safe space to communicate with each other. As discussed later in this chapter, it is critical for men of color to have space where they can be vulnerable and communicate with one another. The relationship they formed through their micro-experiences tied them together and allowed them to overcome years of not speaking due to racial conflict in school. Andre and Miguel's relationship are synonymous with the experiences that other participants in this study described when developing relationships across racial differences. Creating spaces for men to be vulnerable and have honest conversations can go a long way in helping men of color develop intergroup relationships across racial differences.

College Experience

Choosing SBSU

The majority of the participants in this study grew up in similar cities and had comparable socioeconomic backgrounds. As students reflected on their journey into higher

education, many of them described choosing to attend South Bay State University (SBSU) for similar reasons. The top three reasons students chose to attend SBSU were the low cost of attendance relative to other 4-year public institutions, the university's proximity to their home community, and because they felt comfortable due to the campus's size and demographics. For example, when asked why he chose to attend South Bay State University, Raheem said:

> Man, honestly, the first thing that made me come here was cost, I thought about all the expenses. I wanted to go to North State University and Oakland State University; those were my first two options. I was, like, all right, I need to go into the Bay area. I'm going to northern California. Then, I started thinking about all of the costs and fees and my father. And I was just like, you know, it wouldn't be too bad for me to stay home and it will save me a lot more money, it wouldn't be bad. So, that's why I decided to come to South Bay State University.

Antonio reflected on the reasons he chose to attend South Bay State University and stated:

> It was close to my community. I thought, I like the size of it. Initially, I was going to go to Orange Coast State University, but I thought it might be too busy traffic-wise. So, I chose South Bay State University because of the size. Because it was small. Because I feel like it might be more peaceful. As soon as I got here, I fell in love with it. It was just the right size for me. It was close to me.

Lastly, Edgar shared:

> I chose South Bay State University because it was so small. A small campus and it was in the community, and there were a lot of people like me. I liked that because I felt like I was going to be comfortable here.

The participants in this study described South Bay State University as offering a feasible option for attending a 4-year university due to the cost of attendance. Many of the students and alumni in this study described themselves as coming from a low-income background. They shared that their parents did not have the ability to support them in college financially. Therefore, the cost of attendance served as an essential factor in their decision on where to attend college. Moreover, the participants described wanting to be close to home so they could continue to support their families. South Bay State University allowed them to stay close to their home community and save money by living at home. This is not uncommon for students at SBSU; 95% of the students attending SBSU live off-campus. Thus, the majority of students leave the college campus and return to the social-political climate the students described they experienced while growing up. Although this served as a cost-saving mechanism for the students, this also presents a unique interconnected relationship between SBSU and the surrounding communities. The students who attend SBSU are still connected to their home community. As such, what happens on campus and what happens in their community both inform how the students make meaning of their college experience. Many of the students on campus must learn to navigate their college campus environment as well as navigate their home communities.

Positive Experiences in College

During the interviews, all the students and alumni in this study described having a positive college experience. The majority of the participants contributed their positive experience to being involved with the Brothers of Excellence program. Raheem reflected on how BE helped him develop community during a difficult time in his life.

> I was alone for a while, and I didn't have too many friends. I was by myself. I was depressed, I don't really know, I can't diagnose, I won't diagnose myself. I didn't

> really want to meet new people. I think it was social anxiety. I just was scared to meet new people to be around, and stuff like that. It sucked at first, but then started to be around BE members. I was always around BE but didn't join until recently. It was a slow start; it was definitely a life lesson; it had me at one of my lowest points to where I had to develop into this person I am today, to where I feel like I'm definitely a part of this community here, even from being a peer mentor, moving on to the job I do now. You can take hold of those types of opportunities, and being different and creative on campus and people that I want to work with are just cool people.

For Raheem, the Brothers of Excellence program provided an opportunity for him to overcome what he describes as social anxiety. Early in his college experience, Raheem felt isolated and disconnected. However, in BE, he found community and opportunities to develop his leadership skills. He was able to serve as a mentor in the program and hold leadership positions. In my conversation with Raheem, he shared that this engagement was critical to his success and development.

Similarly, Edgar provided insight into how BE changed the trajectory of his college experience.

> BE has honestly changed me. When I came to college, I wasn't very serious about it. Once I saw BE, everyone doing what they got to do, like study sessions and holding just different stuff…like general body meetings, success seminars, thinking about masculinity, intersectionality, and all that stuff. It's very important for our community because sometimes we fall into that, even if we don't notice it.

The Brothers of Excellence program provided Edgar with a transformative experience. The members of BE inspired Edgar to take college seriously. Furthermore, the topics of their discussions touched on issues he felt were important to him and his community. Like Edgar's experience demonstrates, male-centered initiatives can provide interactive development opportunities that improve the college experience for men of color (Brooms et al., 2018).

Choosing Brothers of Excellence

The participants in this study claimed they joined the Brothers of Excellence program because it aligned with their goals and values. More specifically, the students and alumni described joining BE for three reasons. First, they were seeking opportunities to grow and become better men. Secondly, they wanted to engage their community in meaningful ways. Lastly, BE provided a space designed specifically for Black and Latino males. Despite the dominant narratives regarding Black and Latino conflicts in Los Angeles, the participants in this study still desired a space that was created specifically for males of color, and that spoke to their capacity for success and their ability to make meaningful change in their community. For instance, Antonio stated:

> At the time, I was looking to become a better man, in a sense. I'm a minority, but I'm a man. We're both looked down upon, man being like ... machismo ... we're the worst with this, or we're cheaters. I was just trying to educate myself. I wanted to become a gentleman. A good, educated man, trying to just do good for my family, provide, and all that. And I was also a minority. I was a Mexican man, and I was trying to just improve on that. And then BE appealed to both: men of color trying to do good, and trying to educate themselves and seek higher education. And that's what appealed to me the most, and the fact that it wasn't shared with

> one race. It wasn't a Latino slant, or African American slant; it was actually everyone. And that exposed me to other people that are different and trying to do the same thing as me. To me, that was golden.

Antonio's motivation for joining BE was twofold. First, it spoke to him as a man of color. He felt like being a man of color was looked down upon. They were stereotyped as being aggressive and having masculine pride (machismo), and being unfaithful in their intimate relationships. However, Antonio desired to be a gentleman who provided for his family. Secondly, BE offered an opportunity to engage with Black and Latino males. Antonio saw the inclusivity of the program as a positive because it allowed him to meet students who came from different backgrounds but had similar goals and aspirations. Earlier in this chapter, I pointed to the fact that Antonio felt he was connected from the start with a Black male in elementary school. He was able to form this relationship with a Black male peer even though he heard family members speak negatively about the Black community.

In my interview with Antonio, he recalled hearing racial slurs exchanged between Black and Latino peers during his middle school and high school experience. Nevertheless, when he arrived in college, he was open to the idea of engaging in meaningful ways with Black males. Like many of the participants in this study, Antonio's experiences speak to the opportunity that colleges and universities have with Black and Latino males. Despite coming from environments where Black and Brown conflict is normalized, young men of color often desire places explicitly designed for males of color to connect. Similarly, Pelotero described what inspired him to join BE.

> Meeting all them, that was shell-shock. Having that experience from high school with the African Americans and then seeing them here, at a college level, and seeing what they're about, hearing their stories and hearing why BE was founded and their mission and what they do, I was like, "Damn. That's something I could get plugged into." That's something I was interested in. It's a beautiful thing seeing people of color in higher education. Especially first-generation and being Latino and African American males. We're striving for things. We're the first in our families. Essentially, the future providers and being that example. We're not just gang-bangers. Everything that's told in the media. I don't have to say it. If you hear what they say about our community and our people, I carry that every day. I'm like, "I'm not going to be another statistic." But seeing that in the space and environment, I feel comfortable. I feel safe. I feel like nobody is going to judge me for nothing, what I say or what I do or what I did in the past or whatever.

Pelotero's comments speak to the drastic contrast between what he was told about the Black community growing up, and what he experienced in his first meeting with BE. He often heard family members express negative sentiments towards the Black community. For example, he shared in our interview that he remembered being told that Black males have no future. However, this contradicts his first-hand experience in BE. This was a jarring experience for him, and he states he was "shell-shocked." At this meeting, he heard African American members discussing their personal stories and the history of the organization. These narratives offered by students in BE inspired him and caused him to want to join the organization. When Pelotero states, "I carry that everyday," he is speaking to the burden he carries trying to overcome stereotypes

attributed to males of color. Brothers of Excellence offered him an opportunity to ease that burden. He no longer felt like he had to carry it alone. Instead, he could be in a community with like-minded peers who were working to become the best version of themselves. As a result, Pelotero describes feeling safe and comfortable.

The other theme that arose when analyzing why students joined BE was it offered them an opportunity to engage with their community in meaningful ways. When reflecting on why he joined the organization, Gabriel recalled:

> It was during our Summer Bridge program. At first, I thought it was like a little fluffy. And then they said, "I work with schools in South Central," and that just caught my attention. Right after he gave his speech, we had to leave, but I stayed like for 15 minutes just talking to him. I told him, "Damn, you guys work in South Central?" He says, "Yeah, we have connections over there, we help students, young men of color in middle and high schools over there," and I'm like, "I'm interested in the kind of stuff you guys are doing." And ever since then, I've been connected.

Gabriel offered a different angle on why men of color may join an organization like Brothers of Excellence. From his perspective, the narratives offered by the students and the history of the organization seemed "fluffy." This did not entice him to want to join the organization. However, when the student leaders began to describe the work they were doing in the community, it piqued his interest. This showed Gabriel that BE was more than just feel-good stories. They were committed to serving the community in ways that made a difference in the lives of young men of color. This was the catalyst for Gabriel joining the organization. Gabriel's

experience speaks to the willingness of the young men to serve as role models to younger outgroup males.

Despite the presence of tension between Black and Brown community members, the students in this study repeatedly stated they desired to serve as role models and mentors to Black and Latino males. Similarly, previous literature found that men of color join male-centered initiatives because the program aligned with their values, and they wanted to be role models (Brooms, 2019; Person et al., 2017). Collectively, the men in this study articulated that their desire to enhance their personal development and make a positive impact in the community propelled them to engage in the Male Centered Initiatives program. Therefore, male-centered initiatives that promote personal development and community engagement can serve as an effective tool to facilitate coalition-building efforts across racial differences.

Brotherhood

This study sought to uncover how Black and Latino males form intergroup relationships at a 4-year public institution. More specifically, I examined the experiences of Black and Latino males in a Male Centered Initiatives program to see how they developed relationships across racial differences. The three words that participants used when describing how their relationships were formed are: (1) Brothers; (2) Space; and (3) Talk.

During my interviews, participants frequently referred to members of BE as "brothers," which they used as a term of endearment to describe the familial bonds they developed with one another. Students defined brotherhood as consisting of accountability and care for their BE peers. For example, Dennis stated:

> I'm calling you my brother because I see you as my brother…So, now you're just my brother... I see your race, don't get me wrong, I won't say I don't see your race.

> But I just see you as my brother now, so you're just my brother. And we all cool, we kicking it. We all trying to connect with each other. And that's mostly because of BE, that's the kind of brotherhood we have. You're my brother, and I'm going to look out for you.

In my conversation with Dennis, he described brotherhood as being more than skin deep. He shared that brotherhood is developed when the members of BE demonstrate care for one another by holding each other accountable and actively supporting their academic and personal goals. The close relationships they developed with each other centered on their similarities and humanity. As a result, participants described their differences as it pertains to their phenotype and cultural background as becoming less important.

In my conversation with the men in this study, brotherhood was also defined as caring for one another. When reflecting on the BE brotherhood, Malcolm described it this way:

> It comes in the real, unspoken and unseen acts and under the radar expressions and interactions. Like the little things that you feel like really demonstrate brotherhood; so, the first example would just be something as simple as, you know, my brother needs a ride to the airport. His flight takes off at six in the morning, so you got to get up in the morning. If you have a firm and a proper understanding of brotherhood, then what you're being asked to do, it's not even a question. It's come on, man, like, I got, you know? Another example I can think of is really simple things like if you're out, driving whatever and then you go, Man, I'm hungry, right? You pull into a drive-thru or whatever, and you order your food, and you ask, "What do you want?" And then he goes, "Oh, I don't have any money" or whatever the case is, and you go, "No, like, get what you want."

> And I'm saying, like, I can't eat if you're not eating. Oftentimes those decisions that are made, you don't even really think about what you lose because you don't lose anything. I'm saying the things that, on the surface level, they seem like these sacrifices are these things that you lose. When you have a true understanding of brotherhood, they were really things that you gain because it's just this unspoken, like, power of connectedness.

For Malcolm, brotherhood meant demonstrating you cared about your peer's success and well-being. This meant BE members might have to sacrifice time and resources to help their brothers. Malcolm's comment, "I can't eat if you're not eating," shows the interconnected relationships the young men felt with each other. Furthermore, he believed that the sacrifices they made paled in comparison to the community they developed. Similar to previous literature on participants in males of color programs, the men in this study described the brotherhood as being a source of comfort, motivation, and accountability (Brooms et al., 2018; Person et al., 2017).

Space to breathe, to live. As students reflected on the role of BE in helping them to develop relationships across racial differences, they often used the term "space." When using the word "space," students described why they needed a unique space designed specifically for them, and they also offered insight into why the BE space was different from other spaces on campus. When asked, "What specific things does the program do to help participants develop relationships across racial differences?" Malcolm responded:

> The ultimate thing is that BE is one of the greatest, I guess, actors in creating space. The backgrounds we come from, the lives we live, in and of themselves, don't allow us the room to breathe. We say, "I am too busy doing this over here."

> Or, it doesn't afford us the privilege to be able to break bread because I don't have any money. You know what I mean? So, for BE, what I believe to be their prime, like skew, is simply creating space…creating space for most of us to breathe, to live. Because once that happens, you're like, oh, wow, like, look at the world around me. I've been so busy, you know, fighting the conditions I live in that I'm in a space where those conditions are not hanging over my head; this burden on my shoulders is temporarily lifted, and now I can stand up straight.

Malcolm describes BE as creating a liberating space where young men of color can slow down from their busy schedules and eat with one another. However, Malcolm claims this is important and unique because it allows the young men to exhale or release all the things they carry with them on a daily basis. This allows them to see beyond their current conditions and connect in meaningful ways.

The space that Brothers of Excellence provided was an opportunity for young men to engage in something different from what they had experienced before attending South Bay State University. Antonio spoke to this when he said:

> BE definitely made an impact on me, a huge impact. Everything is unified. I wasn't in spaces where Blacks and Whites were beefing. I wasn't in a space where Blacks and Latinos were beefing. I was in a space where Blacks and Latinos were trying to work towards something positive. That made it cooler. I felt like now I could finally be exposed to their culture, and they could finally be exposed to my culture. And that's the thing. I got brothers. African Americans call me Hermano. That's respect.

Antonio's comments highlight the differences between what students experienced outside of BE and what they experienced within the organization. In many ways, the students described the racial conflict as being normalized in their community. Mostly, conflicts between the Black and Latino communities shaped their pre-college experiences. However, BE created a space free from what they knew or were taught in their community. It offered an environment where communities were unified, and mutual respect was shared. This opened the door for Antonio to learn about a different culture, which is something that he may have wanted to explore but was unable to experience due to the environment he grew up in.

In their narratives, students shared their thoughts on why the BE space was needed. Collectively, they pointed to issues of masculinity and challenges that commuter students often experience. For example, Gabriel shared his thoughts on why the space created by BE is needed.

> In our communities, it's like you're living with each other, but it's hard to connect. I don't know why. It's just very hard to connect with the Black folks within our communities or even Brown folks, vice versa too. Especially for men. I don't know why. Maybe just, like, masculinity. It's different from here, though. I guess just having that space to be able to talk to each other.

Gabriel addressed fundamental issues that Black and Latino males face in forming relationships. First, living in proximity to one another does not mean that relationships will form across racial differences. As Gabriel indicates, men of color often find it challenging to connect. As we learned earlier in the chapter, the men in this study encountered many obstacles that made it difficult to develop relationships across racial differences. More specifically, the participants in this study pointed to being socialized by family and peers to believe outgroup males were the enemy and not to be trusted.

Additionally, they witnessed violence between Black and Latino men that reinforced these stereotypes. As a result, many of the participants expressed having superficial relationships with one another and considered each other acquaintances more than friends. In my conversation with Gabriel, he pointed to toxic masculinity as a factor that complicates the relationships between Black and Latino males. This causes men to perform hyper-masculine behaviors such as fighting to protect themselves. However, Gabriel believes the space created by BE is different because it creates a space where students feel comfortable enough to set aside their hyper-masculine behaviors and speak with one another.

The students in this study reported that they do not often have spaces created for them to address Black and Latino issues. Antonio and Mike pointed out that these spaces become even more scarce and complicated for commuter students.

> Antonio: In other places, like in schools, there are no spaces where they come together and speak about it [Black and Latino relationships]. Because we're not going to speak about it outside the liquor store. We're not going to speak about it on the streets or anything, or in malls; we come and go. BE is a space where you could come together in a sense, and talk about our experiences, and surely enough, we've got something in common.
>
> Mike: Space is way more authentic than just a quick talk about your class. It's special. In college, you don't really get to interact with other people like that. Especially for students who just come into school and leave, they don't have time to interact with anyone. They don't want to spend time interacting with anybody. It's not motivational. We ask that student, “Oh, so, how's college?” “Oh, it's boring.” But when you join spaces like BE, you ask a brother, “Hey, how's school

> going?" "Bro, it's good. I'm about to go head out to a conference right now." It's motivating. They're doing big things. BE built a brotherhood to a point where if they see a brother doing good, they don't hate. They don't be like, "Oh, he just got lucky," or whatever. Or, "He just, he got the hookup," or something. It's motivation to you to that brother, saying, "Oh, I'm going to be like my brother. I want to be that great too." We just encourage one another. There's no hate in BE. It's just encouraging others…it's like one of my brothers says, "When I eat, all my brothers eat, not just me." It's like that.

Antonio and Mike highlight some of the challenges that men of color who commute to campus may experience. First, Antonio states that his fellow students do not have spaces in their schools to speak about Black and Latino relationships. As he reflected on how Blacks and Latinos typically interact outside of school, he suggested that these important conversations are not going to take place in public spaces such as a shopping mall. He believes it is unlikely to happen without a structured and intentional effort made to bridge the gap between the two communities. Mike's comments speak to the inspirational effect the BE space has on students. He argues that the BE space allows students to engage with one another authentically. This is not always the case in other settings, such as a classroom. The brotherhood allows students to inspire one another, celebrate each other's successes, and lift as they climb. The space created by BE provides students with an opportunity to engage in authentic dialogue and uncover similarities, which leads to their solidarity.

Vulnerable and healing space. The students in this study offered their perspective on how the space created by Brothers of Excellence helps them connect with other males of color.

Collectively, students described BE's space as challenging hegemonic notions of masculinity and providing them a safe space to be vulnerable and honest. When asked how the program facilitated relationships across racial differences, Junior, a Latino undergraduate, shared:

> It provides a space where we can connect, we can be vulnerable, we can be real, and we can be honest with each other, and invite people from whatever upbringing, whatever race. Even if they don't like talking to this X community or whatever it might be, X color of people or a certain type of people with a specific ethnicity or sexuality even. Their family members, their father, their grandmothers may hate these people. Hate even seeing the sight of these people. We still vibe with each other. That's progress, that's power, that's unity.

Like Junior, many of the students in this study described creating a space where men of color can be vulnerable as being critical to forming relationships across racial differences. The participants in this study often came from backgrounds where they had intimate relationships with people who held opposing views of individuals who belong to an outgroup. Nevertheless, the students were able to develop relationships across racial differences. According to the narratives offered in this study, the forming of relationships across racial differences took place because BE created a space where men of color could be vulnerable with one another. Moreover, the participants in this study pointed out that intentionally creating spaces for men of color can help them bridge gaps between people with different racial identities, different upbringings, and differences in sexuality. These spaces challenge hegemonic notions of masculinity and allow students to connect in meaningful ways. As Junior states, "this is a powerful experience for students."

In addition to being vulnerable, students described the space created by BE as being therapeutic. More specifically, as participants reflected on how they formed relationships across

racial differences, students highlighted the therapeutic process they encountered in the BE space. BE created a healing space where students could express themselves. For example, Pelotero shared the following:

> Especially in retreats when we talk about our experiences. That's when it's (brotherhood) built the most in the retreat. I know everybody is busy, but I'm held responsible. I hold myself responsible after the retreats and during the semesters when we engage, bringing those conversations back up, what we talked about during our retreats. Those spaces, they're special because we can't have everybody on the same page at the same time with our busy schedules and stuff like that. Those retreats, we're away from the city. We're not worried about what's going on in our lives. We're just in the moment. I know, personally, I'm always like, "I got to do this and this." Being in the moment is therapeutic, basically. We just gain more respect and knowledge from one another.

Pelotero describes the challenges that commuter students may encounter. Over 95% of the students attending South Bay State University live off-campus. Many of the students are first-generation college students and have demanding schedules that make it difficult for them to connect with their peers. Thus, it is important for spaces to be created that allow students to slow down, and as Pelotero stated, "be in the moment." When men of color can be in a space where they do not feel pressure to perform masculine scripts and can be in the moment, it makes room for them to heal. In the BE space, students have opportunities to come together and heal from the struggles they have experienced. It also created an opportunity for them to disrupt the cycle of the Black and Brown conflict. The BE space contests what they were taught from family, peers,

and the violent conflicts in their community. As Pelotero's comments demonstrate, as the men heal, they begin to gain respect for their outgroup peers and can learn from one another.

In order to develop relationships between Black and Brown students, educators need to consider healing that may need to take place. In this study, the participants described the importance of collective healing from the social trauma they experienced, such as witnessing Black and Brown conflicts (verbal and physical) as well as the need to heal from the pain that was caused by other experiences in life. The findings from this study demonstrate that having a place to be vulnerable and heal was a precursor to developing relationships between Black and Latino males. This allowed the men to be vulnerable, which in turn allowed them to have interactions with one another while their guards were down. As a result, they were able to develop deep bonds with one another.

Moving mountains. As previously noted, one of the most frequent words participants used when describing how they developed relationships across racial differences was the term "talk." Throughout our conversations, the men used the word "talk" to illustrate their meaningful conversations with each other. These micro-experiences ranged from introspective conversations about their identity, community, and goals, to casual conversations about sports, activities, and intimate relationships. Students described these unscripted conversations as being the primary way they developed relationships across racial differences. When asked about developing relationships with his Black male peers in the program, Antonio shared:

> The fact that I could call in the group chat and say, "I need help right now." They'll reach out. And I think that's where the brotherhood sense comes, the fact that we're all trying to do the same thing, and we all have our experiences and our different knowledge and give it to each other so we can help each other out. The

> fact that I could easily count on you, or trust you with something that just brings it up. Just hearing each other's stories out in other communities, in the barrio or wherever; there's no spaces where we can just talk about it. We're not going to just go up randomly and just talk about whatever. We have space where we can go to and talk about it. That's what brings us closer. Once I speak to you, and you see me coming from the same thing, or you grew up here, and I grew up a block away from you. That adds to the relationship.

Antonio's statement reveals how conversations between Black and Latino peers developed into accountability. Once students had a space to communicate with each other, they developed trusting relationships. This peer network became a source of support. They felt comfortable reaching out for help. As Antonio notes, the brotherhood developed because the students felt they could reach out for support, and they would receive it. The BE space brought students closer together because through their conversations students began to see themselves in their peers. As Antonio pointed out, the men shared their narratives, and this allowed them to see similarities. The similarities that students described typically consisted of growing up in the same communities, having similar experiences, and having similar goals.

The space created by BE was not confined to a physical location. Participants described the space as being multi-spatial. For the men in this study, this was important because it meant their bond with their peers went beyond the program's scheduled activities. Jeffery reflected on his interaction with his peers and said:

> The brotherhood's love and respect carry outside of the meetings. If I see Damon on a regular day, it's like, “Hey, what's going on, brother Jeffery?” “What's up, brother Damon?” It's still that amount of love and respect outside of the meetings. Even Andrew, his energy inside the meetings is the same as outside the meetings. I haven't met anyone inside the meeting that I was like, “Oh, yeah. What's up, brother?” And then outside the meetings, it's like, “I don't know you. Man, who you talking to?” It's just been the same type of energy outside and in the meetings. So, that's really cool.

Like other participants in this study, Jeffery spoke to the importance of his relationships with his BE peers carrying over to different settings. This created a sustained sense of brotherhood where students felt like they were connected even outside of the physical space and outside of the programs’ scheduled activities. Mike shared similar sentiments when he offered the following:

> The fact that we respect one another, it shows the brotherhood that we have. The fact that we give each other time to speak, not only do we speak, but we listen to what they have to say. We also encourage them or give them tips if it's helpful. That's how the brotherhood is built; we build trust between us. Not only on campus but outside of campus. We hit each other up, “Hey man, you need help with anything, I'm here,” after class or whatever. BE members, we go eat somewhere, and we interact. We talk about life, not just school, but life. How's life going, how's your mom, how's your family, and that's what builds the brotherhood. It makes it seem like, “Oh, bro, I can count on this guy.” Because you know somebody's only interested in a certain thing if they keep asking about

that certain stuff. But once it's something about your family or even your pet, it's a whole different thing. It's a whole different thing. It's that trust that you've built.

Mike describes BE as paving the way for the students to recreate space outside of the program's activities. The men in BE develop interpersonal communication skills, which allows them to share openly about their thoughts and experiences as well as actively listen to one another. This takes place in scheduled activities, and students then use these skills to continue engaging one another outside of the program and off-campus. Additionally, Mike points out that the multi-spatial experience is not just about academics. His comments point to the fact that men of color want individuals to care about them as more than just students. When he states, "…somebody's only interested in a certain thing if they keep asking about that certain stuff" is a reference to the fact that BE members frequently speak with their peers about things that are important to the students such as their families. This creates a deep bond as they are invested in each other's lives beyond how they perform in the classroom.

A majority of the men in this study shared that the most valuable time for them to engage in intense and prolonged conversations was during the program's summer retreat. This allowed them an opportunity to leave their typical environment, go to the mountains, and spend time with their peers. Students described having meaningful conversations over meals, around the campfire, and late at night. As students invested this time in one another, they were able to see that they had a lot in common with their peers. For example, Raheem reflected on what BE activity was the most effective in helping him form relationships with Latino males:

> The retreat was probably the dopest one, honestly. That's the one…because everybody's busy, everybody got their schedule, but it's always a good time to reconnect with our brothers after ... I might not see a brother for months because

> everybody got work, everybody got family, different obligations; but it's just like that's the time to come around, it's perfect; you give me a reason right before the school starts because it gives you that reminder like, we've got like-minded men here that's on the same path as us; you're not alone.

For Raheem, the retreat provided an opportunity to reconnect with his peers. As previously mentioned, participants in this study typically lived off-campus with their families. The combination of busy schedules and commuting to and from campus limited their opportunity to spend time with their peers. The retreat offered time away from other obligations to refocus on their collective goals. This reinforced the sense of community and brotherhood, which motivated them to excel.

While reflecting on the retreat, Malcolm made sure to point out that the retreat is not special because of the location; he claimed:

> …any time that space is created and brothers enter into the space, it doesn't need any of the flashiness; the location of a retreat is not important. That space is created, and when we're in the space, mountains move. We, in our experiences alone, do the work in really moving those mountains and really creating some powerful things.

In my conversation with Malcolm, he strongly believed that transformational change took place when the men in BE came together and shared their stories, their pain, their fears, their goals, and their hopes for the future. These experiences allowed them to overcome everything they may have been taught about one another or even previously experienced with outgroup males. Consequently, brotherhood could be formed. Given their social context, Malcolm describes this forming of brotherhood as moving mountains.

Reflections on Intergroup Relationships

Navigating Both Realities

The findings from this study reveal that the Brothers of Excellence students and alumni understood that what they were experiencing within their BE community was unique. During the interviews, participants discussed the differences between what was happening in the BE program and what was taking place in their home communities. Within BE, they had brotherhood with outgroup male peers. However, in their neighborhoods, deep divisions were still present between the Black and Latino communities. Therefore, students had to make meaning of this and understand how to navigate both worlds. Andre reflected on this paradox and shared:

> Well, outside of Miguel, it's very different because I still was living in Paramount and the gang activity was still present, and regardless of what I was doing, it was like I was living two different lives. I literally would walk from my front door to my car, with a pistol. I did that for six, seven months because it was still Black and Brown tension there. Here at SBSU, it's all love. It's all love, I got Latino brothers that I'm cool with. We'll break bread, but back outside of SBSU, no, that would get you killed. That war was still existing, and that divisiveness is still existing outside of what we had here. I had to learn how to move through both. I had to learn that, that was still real. I had to learn that it was a privilege that I was in these spaces. Me mentally, I'm able to move through different spaces, where a lot of the homies that I know and I grew up with and are still in my life, were only exposed to that space, that reality. I wasn't going back to the homie saying, "Oh man, we got to love on them, have these conversations about toxic masculinity

> and discuss what we grew up in." They would look at me like I'm crazy. So, both are realities for me. There's no way I can dilute the other because this one's now happening. I can't change that by myself. I have my relationship with Miguel, and I felt that was the capacity and the extent that I can go, and teaching my daughter and my future kids, that it can be done, but that still does not dissolve or eliminate something that is much larger and been existing long before I was born or even thought of. So yeah, man, that's how I had to move. That was my thought processes, and my reality outside of BE…I could be killed by your cousin. You're my brother, and I love you, and I want you to succeed, but you got relatives that probably would take my life. So, those are the realities.

Andre's circumstance speaks to the harsh realities that many of the BE members find themselves in. While on campus, they were exposed to a space where Black and Latino males develop a love for each other and enjoy being in community together. However, outside of campus, the reality of Black and Latino conflict was prevalent. Andre did not live far from campus. Nevertheless, he described being on campus and calling a Latino male his brother, to a few minutes later, parking his car in his neighborhood and then carrying a gun because the Latinos in his community had recently tried to attack him. Therefore, he carried a gun to make sure he got inside his home safely. As Andre noted, the new reality of Black and Latino relationships on campus did not mean that the conflict between Black and Latinos in his community were no longer relevant. He had to understand that both were a reality and identify ways to navigate the two divergent worlds. In the navigation of his neighborhood, Andre had to understand what he needed to do to remain safe. While on campus, he had to reconcile the fact that he had

established strong bonds with Latino males, but that does not mean that this is true for all Latinos. As he points out, some of his Latino brothers in BE may have family members who would take his life. This conscious understanding of both realities was necessary for his survival.

Andre's experience highlights the challenges that educators and students face when attempting to improve Black and Latino relationships. As Andre highlights, his experience on campus did not mean he could instantly create dramatic changes within his community. Students, especially students who commute to campus and then return to their communities daily, need to be able to navigate both environments. Andre describes working to make incremental changes by building relationships with Latinos and working to break the cycle of Black and Latino conflict within his sphere of influence. In my conversation with Andre, he spoke passionately about working with middle school and high school students. His desire was to help them understand that they can either perpetuate the Black and Brown divide, or they can work to build bridges between the two communities.

Similarly, other participants in this study did not allow themselves to become discouraged by the Black and Latino conflict. Instead, they discussed how BE inspired them to work on improving relationships between Black and Latino communities. Specifically, participants shared how BE had equipped them to begin this work in different capacities. Most notably, many of the participants discussed wanting to help future generations improve Black and Latino relationships. While interviewing Felipe, a Latino alumnus, he reflected on how BE prepared him to better support Black male students he engages at work:

> To this day, I feel like I have this really strong connection to the Black community and understanding the struggle that a lot of our students and people go through. And I try to be there for them as much as I can. Even now, at my current job, I can definitely say out of all the staff, a lot of our Black students come to me because they understand that I know a lot of things. I've met a lot of people, and my struggle and my experience definitely connects with them. So, it's definitely been very fluid. And I never try to force anything, and I think that's why my experience has been so amazing with the Black community…to this day, it's something where I'm like, "Yeah, that's family." But it took a lot. I had to learn a lot, and because of that knowledge, I feel comfortable with the Black community, but it wasn't always like that because my family definitely didn't allow it.

Felipe, who now works as an educator, took pride in being able to connect with Black students at work. He believed BE was the reason he had the skills and understanding needed to build relationships with Black males. Similar to other participants in this study, Felipe believed this was important because it allowed him to continue to break down the divide between the Black and Latino communities for future generations.

The significance of intergroup relationships for Black and Latino males. The participants in this study described in great detail what it meant to form relationships across racial differences. In particular, when asked what it meant to have an outgroup male call them "brother," the participants described the personal significance of the peer relationships they developed through their engagement in the Brothers of Excellence program. Specifically, the men used phrases such as "it means the world," "it means a lot," and "it's beautiful," to demonstrate the importance of these relationships. The thoughtful responses to this question,

along with the emotion they expressed, demonstrated the importance of these relationships. For example, when asked what it meant to have an outgroup male call him brother, Malcolm offered the following:

> Really, it means the world because now I have this worldview, that before you know, that prior to BE, I would not have even believed existed. Not only did I not know about it, I didn't know; I didn't know about it. So, really, it's given me this worldview that I can have this love and this passion and this, you know, drive with this group of people that I didn't think was possible before. And what that does is it opens up these relationships and these experiences that you never would have had otherwise. So, for me, I see it as providing me this new outlook on life because now I see the world and I see my own life differently. Like, it's changing, it's a different look, but it's enhanced. It's like, before I was looking at the world on like a like a TV with antennas sticking out of it still. And now, I look at the world with a 4k Ultra HD TV. It's the same concept, but it's so much clearer and so much more vibrant and colorful. I wouldn't want to look at it any other way.

Malcolm described why he believed his relationship with Latino males was important. First, Malcolm describes these relationships as meaning the world to him. This speaks to the high value he places on these relationships. In my conversation with Malcolm, he shared that these relationships were valuable because they enhanced his quality of life. The relationships Malcolm developed allowed him to see the world from a new perspective. It opened his mind to the potential that individuals have to build meaningful relationships across racial differences. Prior to joining BE, Malcolm did not know this was possible.

Furthermore, when Malcolm stated, “I didn’t know; I didn’t know about it,” he was saying that he did not consciously see the benefits of intergroup relationships and chose not to develop them. Instead, due to the socialization he experienced, he repeatedly heard the stories of division between the Black and Latino community. This narrative was so powerful that he did not realize there were benefits in overcoming the divide that existed. Malcolm describes his relationships with his Latino BE peers as “love,” and a “passion” that he did not know was available to him. According to Malcolm, intergroup relationships are important to him because they have allowed him to develop strong bonds with his peers, be exposed to diverse experiences, and acquire an enhanced view of the world.

Additionally, when asked what it meant to have an outgroup male call them “brother,” students described the relationships as being meaningful because it offered an opportunity to reconcile what they were previously taught about outgroup males and replace it with a new reality. For example, Raheem stated:

> It means a lot. Honestly, it just means … It's just like we're doing what they're telling us not to do. We're doing exactly the opposite of what they're saying not to do. We're going against everybody, whether that's your grandparents, your parents, people like that; we're going against what they were taught, and we're changing that for the future generations. It's building those relationships; we might think they're small, but it's opening the way, it's opening the gate for the next generation to be like, “This is okay. Maybe what my parents are saying or what my grandparents are saying about these people are wrong.” We can't keep following this hatred or these stereotypes; we've got to drop this. I feel like those relationships are major keys in shifting the narrative.

Similarly, Mike shared his point of view:

> Mike: It's unique. Growing up with a whole different perspective of having conflict between Black and Brown males, to building a brotherhood, to being actual brothers. Like, "bro, I love you, bro, I appreciate you." It's unique. You don't really see that coming from where I come from; you don't see that at all. Getting into this space with a Black male or a Black female, it's unique. It means a lot to me. It's something that none of my friends back home would picture me doing or even think about it. Yeah, and it's good to meet new people. You don't know how many benefits you can get from that.

Lastly, Antonio shared:

> It means the world. It means a lot. It honestly does. It's comforting…it's just a really good-ass feeling. Honestly, it's the fact that you could call them whenever, and they'd be cool about it. It just makes it better because of the fact that we're moving forward. That's what it is; we're moving forward. With them, I see love. And that's what it is. That means a lot. The fact that I have friends of different cultures, it makes me now, "Okay, finally, we're getting somewhere. We're not stuck." The fact that I build a good relationship with others, that means the world is finally coming in as one. We're trying to do something together.

Raheem, Mike, and Antonio believed their relationships with outgroup males in BE were significant because it challenged the master narratives that Black and Latino males are often told about one another. The intergroup relationships within BE served as evidence that Blacks and Latinos can develop positive relationships across racial differences. As Raheem pointed out, the relationships that are formed through engagement with BE allow students to create their own

narratives. As Raheem, Mike, and Antonio posit, institutions can help facilitate intergroup relationships by serving as storytellers within communities (Broad et al., 2014). The counter-narratives provided by the BE program offered the men new possibilities for the future of their community. In my conversation with Antonio, he believed this was critical. As he stated, “We’re moving forward.” He was describing the collective change and progress taking place in the Black and Latino communities due to the development of intergroup relationships. Antonio believed that the efforts in BE represented collective action to enhance their college experience and improve their community. Participants in this study believed that collective action was essential. As a result, many of them described the need to share this critical lesson with their families and future generations. For example, Isaac said:

> I think it's beautiful. I think that I'm in this position where I'm getting an education. So, I think that I have a responsibility to sort of combat any anti-Blackness that I encounter, even if it's in my family, you know what I'm saying? I look at it as perpetrated by my family, that I have to go fight. Even that's draining. I mean, something's got to give at some point. I think that the same way that Latino communities view Black folks, I think that they're seduced by the way that Black communities also view Latino people right now. I think that there's assumptions that we both have about each other without facts. Without proving anything. I mean, I think to start with that, you know what I'm saying? But, I think for me, it's been a blessing.

Similar to Isaac, many of the participants in this study felt they had a responsibility to combat negative sentiments and stereotypes. This belief was the result of having a positive experience with their outgroup male peers in BE. For example, Isaac

uses “beautiful and “blessing” to describe the significance of his relationships with Black males in BE. The intergroup relationships developed in BE were so meaningful that they inspired the participants in this study to be change agents. As a result, many of them seek opportunities to use their sphere of influence to improve relationships between the Black and Latino communities.

Lastly, the participants in this study believed that being called “brother” by an outgroup male symbolized the deep connection they felt with outgroup males. In my interview with Junior, he shared:

> It feels powerful because that's someone that's not part of who I am, or what my identity is, or my community or anybody in my family's community. Because historically, there is like Watts in south central and east LA. All in LA, it's like it's Black on Brown conflict. When you see that mixture of people, it's just dope, especially at this level because I feel no matter what age, there are people who are still, like, I'm anti-this, I'm anti that, or I try to stay away from these people, or I stay only with my people. I'm a veteran of my people, not all people. So, I feel it's powerful, like saying, “Hermano, like, you’re my brother. You might be Black; you might be from this area, you might have a different upbringing, but you're my bro. We have the same mission.”

Additionally, Pelotero offered the following comment in his response:

> Authentic. That's the best word to say if you're getting plugged into any space. There's going to be a lot of ... How do I say it? It could attract a lot of fake love. They might just want you to be another number in the institution. For example, David and Jonathan [Black males], they're the ones that first accepted me and

took me under their wing and showed me this is what we do. This is it. They both graduated last semester. I still keep in contact. We could benefit from each other. I learn from them. They learn from me. Especially when we went to retreats. Even now, we still have long conversations about anything. Personally, they served as role models for me. I never had my brothers in my life because they were always doing what they had to do in the streets and getting in prison. My father, he could only do so much when it came to education because he wasn't formally educated. He taught me how to be a responsible individual and about becoming a man. But I can't go to him when it comes to education and when it comes to struggles in the LA area. Once I went to South Central, Compton, and Carson, they showed me around their cities and stuff like that. I felt safe but also, having that role model. Damn, their stories I could relate to them. They taught me a lot, and they still do.

As described by Junior and Pelotero, the brotherhood established across racial differences was meaningful because of the social and political environments they had to navigate. Junior recognized how the history of Black and Latino relationships in Los Angeles had created conflict between the two communities. Additionally, Junior highlighted how his Black male peers in BE might come from different backgrounds. Therefore, he describes the fact that they call him brother and Hermano as being powerful. Despite the social and political climate around them, the members of BE were able to cultivate deep, meaningful relationships with one another. As a result, they used the term “brother” to describe the love they had for one another.

For Junior, what helped them form intergroup relationships was recognizing that they have the same objectives and goals. Consequently, he believed it was a powerful

experience. Pelotero described the relationship he developed with David and Jonathon, who were two Black males in BE. Pelotero viewed David and Jonathon as role models because they were able to mentor him in ways his immediate family could not. Pelotero connected to their stories and built a lasting relationship with the two members. Even though David and Jonathon both graduated, he said they were still connected, and he still learns from them.

Collectively, the students believed that having an outgroup male call them "brother" was significant because it represented the deep connections they formed with one another, it allowed them to work together to counter the stories they had been told about outgroup males, and because it enriched their life by showing them the possibilities that can come from their collective action. They described these relationships as refining their outlook on life and inspiring them to make changes in their community. They felt empowered to make incremental changes by continuing to build relationships across racial differences and helping the next generation to understand that they can and should form relationships with people who come from diverse backgrounds and cultures. As Raheem noted, the participants believed that their experience in BE had prepared them to now shift the narrative regarding Black and Latino relationships. Moreover, the participants in this study shared that their intergroup relationships extended beyond their time as undergraduate students at SBSU. As Pelotero described, the students remained connected to one another after graduation and continued to benefit from the relationships they formed. Based on their narratives, the relationships the men in this study formed meant a great deal to them.

Summary of Themes

This chapter examined how Black and Latino males developed intergroup relationships within a Male Centered Initiatives program at a 4-year public institution in Los Angeles, California. This phenomenological study consisted of 20 one-on-one interviews with undergraduate students and alumni (10 Black; 10 Latino). A thorough analysis of the data revealed three themes. First, the theme of "K-12 Experiences" revealed that participants who grew up outside of ethnic enclaves had early friendships across racial differences. These early childhood relationships were developed due to what Andre described as micro-experiences. Collectively, the participants in this study described this as multiple interactions with outgroup males that allowed them to bond due to similar interests, backgrounds, and goals. Over time, the amassing of micro-experiences led to students developing a bond with one another. However, as participants aged, these relationships began to suffer due to negative outgroup sentiments peddled by family and peers. In addition to negative messages about outgroup males, students also witnessed or experienced violence between the Black and Latino communities. As a result, the participants shared that upon entering college, they felt isolated from outgroup male peers and viewed them as acquaintances rather than friends.

The second theme of "College Experiences" highlights the critical role that the Brothers of Excellence program had in creating a space for men of color to establish brotherhood and develop intergroup relationships. The space created by BE provided an advantageous opportunity for the participants to connect with men of color in authentic ways. More specifically, the space allowed men to disrupt hyper-masculine norms and be vulnerable. This paved the way for the participants to have micro-experiences with one another and connect with other men of color

who share similar interests and goals. The men in this study described this as a therapeutic process.

The last theme of "Reflections on Intergroup Relationships" describes how the participants made meaning of their relationships with one another. The students and alumni participants described the relationships they formed in BE as being critical to their learning and development. The students believed their intergroup relationships improved their outlook on life by helping them overcome what they had been taught to believe about one another. Furthermore, they felt that the friendships they developed were lifelong bonds. Lastly, intergroup relationships inspired students to want to engage their communities in meaningful ways. The majority of participants shared their desire to work with their families and the next generation on improving Black and Latino relationships. Their comments about improving relationships between Black and Latino males shows the inspiring experience they had in BE. Consequently, due to their positive experience, students were motivated to become change agents and felt compelled to continue to live and share what they experienced in the BE program with their community.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Previous research on intergroup relationships in higher education institutions often examined how minority groups interacted with their White peers at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). Very few studies have investigated how students of color form relationships across racial differences. As a result, researchers have argued that there is a need to utilize qualitative methods to study intergroup relationships between communities of color (Broad et al., 2014). Therefore, this study adds to the existing body of literature on intergroup relationships by providing an in-depth examination of how Black and Latino males develop intergroup relationships at a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). Furthermore, researchers have documented an increase in Male Centered Initiatives (Brooms, 2019; Druery & Brooms, 2019). This literature has argued for the need to understand further how Male Centered Initiatives impact student development and how men of color make meaning of their relationships in college (Brooms, 2019; Person et al., 2017). This study contributes to previous research by identifying how Black and Latino males develop intergroup relationships within a Male Centered Initiatives program and how they make meaning of their relationships with one another.

In order to accomplish the goals of this study, a phenomenological approach was used to understand the lived experiences of Black and Latino males that participated in the Brothers of Excellence (BE) program. The BE program is a Male Centered Initiative at a 4-year public institution in Los Angeles County. The study included one-on-one responsive interviews. I used phenomenology and one-on-one interviews because it centers on the voices and lived experiences of the participants. Moreover, one-on-one interviews can provide rich data and concrete examples that reveal how participants developed intergroup relationships and how they

made meaning of their relationships with one another (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). This study consisted of 20 participants. Fourteen of the participants were undergraduate students (7 Black and 7 Latino), and six of the participants were alumni (3 Black and 3 Latino). This chapter provides provide an in-depth discussion of the major themes, the significance of the findings, an outline of the key findings, implications for research and practice, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The findings from this study revealed three overarching themes "K-12 Experiences," "College Experiences," and "Reflections on Intergroup Relationships." The first theme, "K-12 Experiences," provides answers to the third research question, which reveals how students made meaning of their relationships with outgroup males during their K-12 experiences. The second theme, "College Experiences," relates to research questions one and two by offering a thorough analysis of how Black and Latino males developed relationships with one another. The final theme, "Reflections on Intergroup Relationships," documents how the Black and Latino male participants now make meaning of their relationships across racial differences.

K-12 Experiences

The first theme, K-12 Experiences, highlights the difficult paradox participants had to navigate. For many of the participants in this study, intergroup relationships were formed early in primary education due to micro-experiences that allowed them to bond around similar interests. However, as they aged, they encountered negative messages about outgroup males from family, peers, and the community. The messages they received created a powerful socialization process that indoctrinated them to mistrust and fear outgroup males.

Additionally, the majority of the men in this study described being affected by violence between the Black and Latino communities. The combination of their socialization from family and peers, and witnessing violence between Blacks and Latinos in their community, resulted in participants developing shallow relationships with outgroup males. However, even more alarming was the psychological and emotional impact the men described from their socialization process. Ultimately, this theme highlights the powerful mechanism by which the participants were socialized, which encouraged dissention between the two communities.

The K-12 Experiences theme reveals two noteworthy findings. First, the participants' daily lives were influenced by race and racism. The participants in this study came from communities that were shaped by racist laws which intentionally huddled Black and Latinos into neighboring communities and left them to compete with one another for scarce resources (Nixon, 2011). The findings from this study show that many of the Latino students attributed the negative messages they received from family and peers about outgroup males to anti-Blackness in the Latino community. This finding affirms Haywood's (2017) argument that colorism and racism work together to create anti-Black resentment in the Latino community. The Black males who participated in this study also cited anti-immigrant sentiments as the main motivation for them being socialized to fear and distrust Latinos in their community. This supports previous literature, which argued that Black resentment of Latino immigrants is often tied to perceptions of economic opportunity (Gay, 2006; Hero & Preuhs, 2013). The descriptive narratives offered by the participants in this study shed light on how White supremacy can cause communities of color to internalize oppression and engage in horizontal racism. As this study demonstrates, this can result in a socialization process that has dire consequences for Black and Latino males' ability to form intergroup relationships.

The second critical finding from this theme is the unique role of physical violence between Black and Latino males. The overwhelming majority of participants in this study described either witnessing race riots in their schools, or being impacted by a racially motivated fight between Black and Latino males. Furthermore, participants noted that relationships with outgroup females were more likely to develop than relationships with outgroup males. This was often attributed to issues of masculinity. As the men in this study reflected on their experiences, they described males as being the primary perpetrators of intergroup violence. They stated that this aggression was directed towards outgroup males. This supports Navarrete et al.'s (2010) argument that outgroup aggression does not have to target a subordinate group. Instead, this aggression is often motivated by the increase in social status. Collectively, the participants in this study described a gendered socialization process that taught them to fear and distrust outgroup males. The violence between Black and Latino male community members supplemented their socialization. Ultimately, this created a traumatic experience for many of the participants and impaired their ability to form relationships across racial differences.

Lastly, this study confirms Literte's (2011) findings that raciest ideologies prevent close-knit intergroup relationships from developing. However, it extends this research in two ways. First, this study found that Black and Latino males were indoctrinated with racist ideologies about each other by their families. Thus, while in the BE program, participants had to figure out how to reject the racist ideologies their families and friends taught them without rejecting or looking down on their loved ones. More specifically, students had to process what they learned from their loved ones, as well as challenge their assumptions and biases. During this process, students learned how to love and respect outgroup males, without feeling like they were rejecting their own family.

Secondly, the findings from this study speak to the critical role that faculty, staff, and administrators have in helping to facilitate intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males. As previously mentioned, this study focused on the Brothers of Excellence program. The findings from this study reveal the critical role that initiatives like the BE program can play in developing intergroup relationships across racial differences. Next, I outline the second theme of this study, which describes the environment that professional staff need to cultivate to facilitate intergroup relationships within male-centered initiatives.

College Experiences

The second theme of this study is College Experiences. When participants in this study were asked, "What specific things does the program do to help participants develop relationships across racial differences?" the students described the BE program as being a creator of a unique space designed for males of color. They described the BE space as being a place that allowed them to slow down from their busy schedules and spend meaningful time with their male peers. Many of the participants in this study described being commuter students with busy schedules. The BE space provided the young men an opportunity to release the burdens they carried with them on a daily basis. As a result, the BE members were able to see beyond their current struggles and make meaningful connections with male peers. The connections that were developed allowed them to share their recent success stories, goals, and hopes for the future. The participants described this as being inspirational and liberating.

The participants in this study also outlined why spaces like the BE program are needed. The current and former BE members claimed that it was difficult for men of color to develop intergroup relationships even though they lived in communities comprised of Black and Brown residents. As previously discussed, socialization and violence in the community were factors that

led to the lack of meaningful relationships between Black and Latino males. Additionally, toxic masculinity was another reason the participants believed it was difficult for them to form relationships with outgroup males. Due to gender roles, men often find it challenging to connect with same-sex peers and place less value on friendships with other men (Demir & Orthel, 2011; Felmlee, Sweet, & Sinclair, 2012). The men in this study pointed out that the space created by the BE program allowed them to break away from hyper-masculine behaviors that prevented their relationship-building efforts. For example, the BE space allowed them to have authentic dialogues with one another about the challenges they had experienced and what they want in the future. The BE members did not feel pressured to perform masculine scripts, which would typically prevent them from being open and vulnerable. As a result, the participants described BE space as a healing space. This healing helped them to overcome the powerful indoctrination they experienced that taught them to fear and not trust outgroup males. The therapeutic process BE members experienced allowed them to develop a sense of solidarity with outgroup males.

The narratives offered by the participants led to three emerging key findings related to "space." First, there is a need for men of color to have spaces uniquely designed for them. More specifically, within Hispanic-Serving Institutions, male-centered initiatives programs can play an instrumental role in providing space for men of color to be let their guard down and heal. Based on the experiences of the men in this study, racism and toxic masculinity combined to create traumatic experiences prior to attending college. This affirms research findings from the Robert Wood Foundation's issue brief on "Trauma and Violence and Boys and Young Men of Color" (Rich, 2016). The report found that due to racism and violence, boys and men of color are more likely to experience trauma. However, human-serving institutions, such as colleges and universities, are not likely to provide a healing response. Therefore, the findings from this

current study are critical because they indicate that Hispanic-Serving Institutions can develop Male-Centered Initiatives that help Black and Latino males heal and process past experiences. This healing process can help men of color develop authentic relationships across racial differences.

Additionally, this particular finding extends Broad, Gonzalez, and Ball-Rokeach's (2014) study, which suggested that increased contact can improve relationships between Black and Latinos. The findings of this current study suggest that contact alone may not lead to intergroup relationships. The traumatizing socialization was something that many of the participants felt uncomfortable discussing. They were taught anti-Black and anti-Latino sentiments and ideologies by their loved ones. It was difficult for them to reconcile the fact that the individuals who often loved them, raised them, motivated them, and served as role models, were also the same individuals peddling negative stereotypes about outgroup males. The socialization created an emotional and psychological distance between Black and Latino males even when they were in proximity to one another. Therefore, many of the men suggested they would not have shared what they were taught if not for a unique space being designed specifically for them. It was necessary for a space to be created so the young men could process what they had experienced in life, and to develop relationships with one another in an authentic and vulnerable way. This allowed them to go through a process of collective healing and form strong bonds with one another.

Secondly, the theme of College Experiences highlights that Black and Latino males benefit from a space that is multi-spatial. The participants in this study shared that their experiences were not isolated to a physical location or meetings scheduled by the program. The participants described an environment that allowed them to recreate the culture that was

established in the BE program. As a result, students had more opportunities to engage in critical dialogue about differences, bond around similarities, and discuss their future goals with outgroup males. Research that examines how college students engage in critical dialogue across differences often examines brave spaces, and intergroup dialogue models (Arao & Clemens, 2013; Cook-Sather, 2016; Sorensen et al., 2009; Thakral et al., 2016). This research usually suggests that critical dialogue and intergroup relationships are formed under the supervision of faculty or staff, and take place in a physical location (classroom or cultural resource center). However, the findings from this current study indicate that Male Centered Initiatives can help men of color develop intergroup relationships by creating a space that is multi-spatial. Therefore, MCIs need to consider how they can create a culture that encourages community-building efforts outside of their scheduled activities. This can inspire men of color to take ownership of their academic experience and empower them to challenge horizontal racism by actively creating environments where Black and Latino solidarity is developed and celebrated.

The final key finding from the theme of College Experiences reveals that despite the impact of horizontal racism and hyper-masculinity, men of color desired opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with each other. The men in this study frequently used the term "brother" to describe their BE peers, and "brotherhood" to describe the solidarity between all BE members. The majority of participants in this study experienced traumatic racial hostility before attending college. Nevertheless, they wanted a space that was specifically designed for men of color to be in community with one another. In the BE space, they found a brotherhood made up of outgroup males whom they were taught to fear. However, the BE space was rooted in the concept of brotherhood, which created comradery, accountability, and a support system.

This finding challenges Literte's (2011) argument that coalition-building between Black and Latino college students did not happen because there was no threat to students' welfare. Literte's argument that Black and Latinos need a threat to their welfare from a privileged population in order to form relationships across racial differences positions the Black and Latino dynamic through the lens of what is considered typical at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). More specifically, it situates PWIs as normative and suggests that Black and Latino solidarity can only take place under the direct presence and oppression of a White majority. However, college campuses are becoming more diverse, and institutions that are designated as Hispanic-Serving Institutions and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) are becoming more prevalent. Therefore, it is important to move away from the gaze of PWIs and analyze the experiences of students of color at HSIs and MSIs from a new perspective. These findings suggest that in order for meaningful intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males to be developed at an HSI, there needs to be a space created for men of color to develop authentic relationships with one another.

Reflections on Intergroup Relationships

The third theme that emerged from this study was Reflections on Intergroup Relationships. This theme outlined how the participants made meaning of their relationships with their Brothers of Excellence peers. The men in this study described their relationships with outgroup males as being extremely important. Similar to the findings by Brooms et al. (2018), the men in this study claimed that developing intergroup relationships across racial differences allowed them to learn from their peers, expanded their support network, and allowed them to envision new possibilities for their community. As a result, the relationships they developed meant a great deal to the men in this study. As the participants reflected on what their

relationships with outgroup males meant, many of them became emotional and expressed their sincere gratitude for their newly-developed peer relationships.

The men in this study also noted that they lived in dual realities. On the one hand, the relationships they developed in the BE program with outgroup males resulted in a transformative experience. However, this did not change the presence of Black and Latino tension in their community. Consequently, students had to learn to navigate both realities. The dual realities motivated the men to contribute to change in their community by sharing what they had experienced and learned in the BE program with their families, friends, and mentees.

Similarly, Person et al. (2017) found that MCIs inspired students to be role models in their community. In particular, the study found that the men who participated in MCIs wanted to support other young men of color and their families. The findings from this current study indicate that the men who participated in BE had similar motivations. The current and former BE members believed healthy intergroup relationships between Black and Latinos represented progress for their community. As a result, their desire to serve their community included a commitment to help others within their sphere of influence to develop relationships across racial differences.

Summary of Key Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males at a 4-year public institution in Los Angeles, California. The first research question asked, "How do Black and Latino males develop intergroup relationships within a Male Centered Initiative at a 4-year public institution?" The findings show that the participants in this study developed intergroup relationships because they were able to go through a process that included multiple interactions with outgroup males. While interacting with their outgroup male peers, the

participants claimed they were able to have honest conversations with each other. The conversations were critical because it was one of the few opportunities participants had to engage in authentic dialogue with outgroup males. This engagement with outgroup males resulted in individuals bonding around similar interests, backgrounds, and goals.

Moreover, their engagement included reflective conversations about their identity and community. The participants described this engagement as beginning in the BE program but continued outside of the program's scheduled activities. Thus, they were able to have prolonged communications with each other about common interests. Andre used the term "micro-experiences" to describe this process of developing intergroup relationships with outgroup males. Collectively, the participants described the accumulation of their "micro-experiences" as being pivotal to the formation of their relationships across racial differences.

The second research question, "How do Male Centered Initiatives facilitate intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males?," revealed that the primary way the Brothers of Excellence program facilitated relationships was by creating space for the participants to connect. The data from this study revealed that the BE space allowed students to cast-off masculine scripts they felt pressured to follow. In the BE space, students were able to be vulnerable and engage in honest conversations about what they had experienced and their hopes for the future. As a result, students described the BE program as providing a therapeutic space where they received healing in the process. This process of challenging hegemonic notions of masculinity, collective healing, and being vulnerable was needed in order for participants to engage with each other authentically.

Additionally, the BE program provided students with multi-spatial opportunities to develop and engage in their relationships. The multi-spatiality of these students' relationships is

of critical importance because the connections that students developed were not confined to a physical location. Instead, once the participants shared space within the BE program, they were able to recreate similar spaces outside of the programs' scheduled activities. Moreover, the BE space provided students with a break from their busy lives. The majority of students attending South Bay State University are commuter students, and the participants in this study described juggling school, work, and family obligations. However, in the BE program, the men had opportunities to break away from their hectic schedules and spend quality time with one another.

The third research question, "How do Black and Latino males make meaning of their relationships with one another?," found that students grew up in environments where they were taught by family and peers not to trust outgroup males. When reflecting on their K-12 experiences, many of the students in this study described their relationships with outgroup males as mere acquaintances, while others noted that their relationships with outgroup males were adversarial. However, upon entering and engaging in the BE program, students and alumni were able to form meaningful connections across racial differences. The participants in this study shared that these relationships were extremely important to them. The relationships they formed helped them to understand society better and inspired them to make changes in their community. Many of the participants described being motivated to end Black and Latino conflict in their neighborhoods.

Implications of Findings

The findings from this study revealed how Black and Latino males develop intergroup relationships within a Male Centered Initiatives program in Los Angeles. Previous research on Black and Latino males within MCIs have documented the benefits of positive peer relationships (Brooms et al., 2018; Gibson, 2014; Person et al., 2017; Rodriguezstate et al., 2019).

Additionally, the literature on intergroup relationships often examined how students of color interact with their White peers, or studied Black and Latino relationships outside of the educational context (Alimo, 2012; Pastor, 2013; Shin et al., 2015; Thakral et al., 2016). However, this current study examined the experiences of Black and Latino male college students and identified how they developed intergroup relationships across racial differences.

The findings from this study are significant because the number of Black and Latino college students enrolling in public colleges and universities continues to rise (Flores & Park, 2013). As a result, there is a growing need to better understand the experiences of Black and Latino students, and for institutions to identify strategies they can use to support their matriculation and development better. The findings in this study are essential for educators who want to support Black and Latino males' academic success, especially through the creation of a Male-Centered Initiative. Additionally, the findings are important for researchers who seek to understand better the dynamics between Blacks and Latinos, in general, and Black and Latino males more specifically.

Implications for Practice within Male Centered Initiatives

When considering Male-Centered Initiatives in higher education, four implications for practice emerged in this study. First, Male-Centered Initiatives need to address issues of masculinity and masculine identities. The participants in this study revealed that their socialization experiences were both racialized and gendered. The men described being inundated with racial stereotypes about outgroup males and feeling pressure to conform to hyper-masculine scripts. The combination of negative messages and gender norms served as a barrier to forming intergroup relationships.

Furthermore, the participants articulated that they had opportunities to discuss racial identity with family, peers, and in school. However, the Brothers of Excellence program was unique because it provided them a space to redefine manhood and explore masculinities. Therefore, it is vital for MCIs to promote and model healthy manhood. For the men in this study, their ability to overcome constraining masculine scripts was instrumental in the development of healthy intergroup relationships. This exemplifies the need for young men of color to have a space where they can challenge gender norms and reimagine what it means to be a "man." MCIs should avoid recreating hyper-masculine spaces that reinforce toxic masculinity and marginalize men of color who do not embody traditional notions of manhood.

Secondly, this study shined a light on the need for MCIs to address healing with men of color. The participants in this study described traumatizing pre-college experiences that included negative messages about outgroup males, violence between Black and Latino community members, and hyper-masculine socialization. If Black and Latino males are to develop meaningful relationships with each other within MCIs, then spaces must be created for students to process and heal from what they have learned about outgroup males. As the men in this study described, having a therapeutic space in the BE program allowed them to be vulnerable. Their vulnerability and healing were the foundation of their intergroup relationships. It allowed them to connect with their male peers in authentic ways.

Third, the findings from this study indicate that Male Centered Initiatives need to reimagine how a space can be created on campus. As Malcolm eloquently stated in his interview, the BE program differentiated itself by being "one of the greatest actors in creating space." The men in this study offered vivid descriptions of space within a Hispanic-Serving Institution that went beyond what is typically found in the literature on brave spaces and cultural centers (Cook-

Sather, 2016). The participants described their space as being multi-spatial, meaning a culture was created that empowered students to be agents of creating space with one another outside of the BE program. For the men in this study, the BE space was not static; instead, it was a culture they felt moved with them and allowed them to recreate the BE space around their busy schedules. The experiences outside of scheduled activities and services were essential for the development of intergroup relationships between the Black and Latino males in this study. The BE culture allowed the participants to engage with each other in meaningful ways when the program could not provide activities. Thus, MCIs should be intentional about creating a culture within their programs that empower students to engage with each other in meaningful ways outside of the program's scheduled activities.

Lastly, educators who wish to support Black and Latino males through the development and implementation of a Male Centered Initiative need to understand the community context that exists on and off-campus. This understanding will provide valuable insight into potential challenges and possible solutions to developing healthy intergroup relationships across racial differences. More specifically, educators working at HSIs, MSIs, and commuter campuses must be mindful of how community dynamics inform students' experiences, ideologies, and relationships. In these situations, students may experience dual realities where their experiences in an MCI may not reflect what is happening in their home community. Therefore, colleges and universities who wish to support Black and Latino males should develop and implement MCIs and make sure they acknowledge the lived experiences of their students. The MCI programs should be culturally relevant and help students to process what is happening off-campus and envision new possibilities for themselves and their communities.

Implications for Administrators and Practitioners

The findings from this study highlight two critical implications for administrators and practitioners who support Male Centered Initiatives. First, practitioners who support MCIs need to be intentional about the culture they create within their program. The participants in this study described the BE culture as transparent, authentic, and therapeutic. The culture enhanced their sense of brotherhood and provided the participants with a community that held them accountable and offered genuine support. Essentially, the participants revealed that the BE staff and students embodied the BE program's values. As the men in this study discussed, for most of their lives, they had performed masculinities and outgroup aggression. However, the BE culture contributed to their transformation. The culture in the BE program helped make the men feel welcomed in their authentic selves and allowed them to work collectively on personal development.

Therefore, in order to create a healthy culture in MCIs, practitioners need to lead their programs from an authentic space. More specifically, the staff needs to embody the mission and values of the program. They can do this by modeling healthy masculinities, being vulnerable with students and colleagues, and by being held accountable for their words and actions. It is imperative for practitioners who desire to work with MCIs to do the work internally before attempting to help men of color. If practitioners have not explored their own experiences, unconscious biases, traumas, and strengths, then the lack of genuineness and the hypocrisy will be evident. This will cause students to periodically perform the program's principals rather than be transformed and embody the program's mission and values.

Administrators can help develop a healthy culture through their transparent participation in meaningful program activities. For example, the participants in this study described overnight retreats as being an important activity. This allowed the students to get away from their busy

schedules and focus on their goals and connect with BE staff and their peers. Administrators who choose to be vulnerable and participate in these activities can demonstrate that educational leaders have dealt with similar challenges and continue to work on personal development. Furthermore, it will allow students to be vulnerable to campus leadership, which may help students feel like they are understood and seen by their leaders on campus. This transparency can enhance students' connection to the campus environment and increase their academic motivation.

Secondly, administrators and practitioners who support MCIs need to understand and affirm the lived experiences of their students. The men in this study described their lived experiences as both on-campus and off-campus interactions. For example, Andre shared that there was a rigid dichotomy between what he experienced within the BE program and what he experienced off-campus in the community. Within the BE program, he found a support network comprised of Black and Latino males. This support network helped him to navigate the campus community and enhanced his academic motivation. However, off-campus, there remained a rift between the Black and Latino communities. For commuter students, navigating both their campus community and their home community can be difficult. Therefore, administrators and practitioners need to commit themselves to understand the lived experiences of students. Furthermore, they can affirm the lived experiences of their students by ensuring MCIs seek to fulfill their mission through partnerships with local schools and community-based organizations. This collaboration can include mentoring young students, engaging in participatory action research, developing sustained collaborations with community-based organizations to carry out community service activities, and articulating the ways students' academic success can be beneficial to their community.

Implications for Colleges and Universities

This study highlights significant implications for colleges and universities seeking to support and enhance Male Centered Initiatives programs. Above all, colleges and universities must commit to supporting faculty and staff. Support for faculty and staff includes investing in an adequate staffing structure (full-time professional staff), supporting professional development (e.g., conferences, mentorship, working groups), promoting opportunities for collaboration across campus (e.g., student affairs, academic affairs). In regards to investing in an adequate staffing structure, institutions need to commit to hiring full-time staff. For example, the Brothers of Excellence program had three full-time staff members who dedicated 100% of their time to working with the BE program. One of these staff members focused exclusively on fostering relationships with K-12 institutions. Institutions must avoid providing part-time staff or assigning MCI responsibilities as additional duties to someone who already has a full-time position. This hinders the staff members' ability to address the complex needs of men of color on campus. A part-time staff member will not be able to commit the necessary time to develop and support the culture needed for an MCI to thrive. Therefore, institutions should attempt to hire full-time professional staff. This should include a staff member at the management level who can address critical issues such as masculinities, vulnerability, and healing.

Colleges and universities can demonstrate their support for faculty and staff by ensuring they have resources needed to participate in professional development opportunities, including training, critical practices, and engaging with relevant research. The MCIs are a relatively new phenomenon when compared with other functional areas in higher education. Therefore, it is crucial for staff to have the opportunity to connect with other individuals who are doing similar work. For example, regional networks such as the California State University's Young Males of

Color Consortium and the Texas Education Consortium for Males of Color are examples of regional networks that provide educators with an opportunity to learn from colleagues who are working to support men of color. Furthermore, MCI staff need to address a variety of complex topics with their students. For instance, staff should be prepared to facilitate discussions around masculinities, racism, sexism, and homophobia. Additionally, staff must be equipped to incorporate trauma-informed practice and promote collective healing (Rich, 2016). Therefore, in addition to attending traditional higher education conferences (NASPA, ACPA, NCORE), MCI staff should seek out opportunities to attend conferences or summits designed specifically for individuals working with young men of color.

Lastly, colleges and universities can support staff by promoting collaboration across campus. For example, institutions should encourage diverse stakeholders to work together and create an innovative strategy for an MCI on their campus. Stakeholders should include faculty, staff, students, and community partners, such as representatives from local school districts. More specifically, there is a need for campuses to expand their understanding of the role an MCI can have on campus. Male Centered Initiatives should be designed to do more than offer advising and mentoring to a small group of men of color on campus. Although advising and mentoring are important, the data from this study revealed that the most beneficial aspects of the BE program were brotherhood, the space to be vulnerable and have authentic communication with their peers, and the opportunity to engage their community in meaningful ways. Therefore, stakeholders should spend time developing a strategy for how their MCI can improve partnerships with the community, develop democratic citizenship among its members, and provide a space for men of color to be vulnerable and develop positive peer relationships.

Universities and colleges can support the collaboration and the development of an innovative strategy for MCI programs by (1) ensuring the MCI staff and stakeholders have access to student data (e.g., enrollment, retention, and graduation) disaggregated by race and gender; (2) providing support for the development of a logic model; (3) encouraging collaboration with institutional research to create a data collection plan; (4) being knowledgeable and communicating the importance of the program and sharing the program's vision and goals with the campus community to ensure there are multiple opportunities for support and collaboration, and (5) acknowledging and celebrating the affective outcomes (brotherhood, the importance of space) to ensure they are recognized and appropriately assessed.

These suggestions require institutions to commit financial resources to support and enhance MCIs on campus. In addition to the budget needs outlined above, colleges and universities need to provide an operating budget that allows the program to create swag, marketing materials, and host engagement opportunities, such as reoccurring meetings and overnight trips (e.g., retreats). It is essential for MCIs to be intentional about creating quality, asset-based marketing materials. The marketing material and swag should emphasize success among men of color. If MCIs do not focus on telling their story, then others may view the program as supporting students who are "at-risk" rather than seeing the program as supporting students who are "at-promise."

As the participants in this study indicated, overnight retreats are unique engagement opportunities that allow students to get away from their hectic schedules, be embedded in a nurturing and culturally engaging environment, and connect with their peers. It is important to note that without these financial commitments, MCIs will likely flounder on campus and struggle to fulfill their mission and meet their goals. Therefore, colleges and universities need to provide

MCIs with the appropriate financial support to meet the aims and goals not only of the program but of the students who are engaged as well.

Implications for K-12 Institutions

This study revealed that the interaction between Black and Latino males in K-12 institutions play a critical role in the development of intergroup relationships. The participants in this study offered vivid descriptions of Black and Latino conflict in their K-12 experiences. As a result, many of them failed to develop meaningful relationships with outgroup males prior to attending college. Thus, there is a need for K-12 institutions to be more explicit in the development of programs that can help promote healthy intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males. Early interventions designed to facilitate relationships across racial differences can prevent men of color from developing deeply ingrained biases toward outgroup males (Lee et al., 2017). Moreover, promoting healing and healthy intergroup relationships among youth can increase civic engagement, and have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing (Ginwright, 2011; Lee et al., 2017).

Collectively, the men in this study stated that working with middle school and high school students was a source of motivation for them. For example, participants described getting involved with the BE program because they mentored men of color in local middle schools and high schools. Additionally, students and alumni claimed that the intergroup relationships they developed in the BE program inspired them to want to work with youth in their local community to help improve Black and Latino racial relationships. Since early interventions are critical, and community engagement can support the academic and personal development of men of color, K-12 institutions should seek collaborations with local colleges and universities in an effort to make meaningful contributions to the community, learn from youth, and challenge traditional notions

of race relations. More specifically, K-12 institutions and MCIs should develop partnerships with one another to allow men of color in MCI programs to mentor male students and address race relations on their campus. When mentors utilize a culturally responsive caring approach to mentoring, it can provide their mentees with an expanded support network that helps them navigate educational institutions, inspire them to achieve academically, and nurture a positive outlook on life and school (Brooms et al., 2018; Jackson et al., 2014).

Moreover, research has shown that when men of color who participate in MCIs mentor youth in their community, it motivates the mentor to improve their academic performance and graduate from college (Broom, 2019). Partnerships with K-12 institutions can be incredibly helpful for regional campuses like the CSU because many of the college students grew up in the surrounding community. Therefore, they will understand community dynamics and be motivated to make a positive change in their community.

Implications for Research

The findings from this study demonstrated ample evidence to suggest that there is a need to study intergroup relationships among students of color in higher education institutions. In particular, there is a need to better understand Black and Latino relationships within different educational contexts. Previous studies have suggested that Black and Latinos can develop intergroup relationships with increased contact (Broad et al., 2014; Oliver & Wong, 2003; Rocha & Espino, 2009). However, the narratives offered by the participants in this study indicate that Black and Latino communities may need more than increased contact to improve intergroup relationships. This study affirmed the findings by Shin et al. (2015), which found that increased contact between communities of color does not necessarily lead to improved perceptions or

relationships with outgroups. Therefore, researchers should examine what factors help to facilitate intergroup relationships between communities of color in higher education.

Additionally, although this study did not provide an in-depth analysis of the participants' identity development, the narratives offered by the men point to the critical role that identity development played in their academic experience. Therefore, it would be beneficial for future research to contribute to Black and Latino males' racialized and gender identity development in higher education.

Lastly, the findings in this study revealed that researcher positionality is important when studying intergroup relationships between Black and Latino males. During the interviews, it was difficult for individuals to discuss the negative sentiments their loved ones had for other racial and ethnic groups. Many of the participants in this study indicated that it was uncomfortable for them to share the negative lessons that their families and peers taught them about outgroup males. For the most part, the participants in this study were taught racial stereotypes from the same individuals who served as their role models and source of motivation. However, due to my positionality with the students, we were able to have an honest conversation about their previous experiences. Therefore, future researchers should consider how they can elicit transparent data from research participants.

Limitations

There are a few noteworthy limitations of this study. First, this study was designed to examine intergroup relationships within a specific context. As a result, the study investigated intergroup relationships among Black and Latino males in Los Angeles. However, the Black and Latino communities are incredibly diverse. Their intra-group relationships and inter-group relationships can vary based on class, geographic location, age, social and political context, and

ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, the findings from this study are not meant to be generalized to Black and Latino populations.

Another limitation of this study is that it examined the experiences of Black and Latino males within a specific Male Centered Initiatives program that students self-select into. Therefore, this study does not account for the differences between students who chose to join the BE program as opposed to students who did not choose to be members. Additionally, the experiences of students at this 4-year public institution may not be representative of students engaged in similar programs at 2-year colleges or other types of 4-year institutions.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings and limitations of this study point to the need for future research. First, as colleges and universities become increasingly diverse, there is a need to understand better how students of color develop intergroup relationships across racial differences. In particular, this study did not include various populations that warrant further research. For example, peer relationships are important for women of color and understanding how Black women and Latinas develop intergroup relationships is needed. Additionally, Asian Americans are the fastest-growing minority population. Their interaction with other communities of color is also essential. For example, Asian Americans have been directly involved and impacted by race issues in recent history, such as the 1992 Los Angeles uprising. Therefore, the relationship between Asian Americans and other communities of color is an area that deserves further research.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates the need to examine the experiences of students of color at Hispanic-Serving Institutions as a unique phenomenon. The majority of research on students of color examines their experiences at Predominantly White Institutions. However, students of color are more likely to attend Hispanic-Serving Institutions and Minority-Serving

Institutions. Therefore, there is a need to understand better the experiences of students of color within these institutions.

Lastly, there is a need for researchers to examine how male-centered initiatives facilitate intergroup relationships across racial differences. This study utilized qualitative methods to understand the lived experiences of Black and Latino males in the Brothers of Excellence program. Future studies could use a mixed-methods approach to explore the quality of intergroup relationships within MCIs and evaluate whether there are differences between relationships developed within MCIs compared to relationships developed outside of MCIs. Researchers could also examine how educators who are responsible for MCIs can support collective healing among men of color.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine how Black and Latino males who participated in a Male Centered Initiatives program at a public 4-year university in Los Angeles, California developed intergroup relationships across racial differences. The findings revealed that many of the participants were socialized to fear and distrust outgroup males. As a result, the majority of participants did not have meaningful relationships with outgroup males. Additionally, evidence suggested that the Brothers of Excellence program helped develop intergroup relationships by creating space for men of color to heal from traumatic experiences. The healing they experienced in the BE program allowed the participants to be open and connect in meaningful ways. For the men in this study, their intergroup relationships with their BE peers were significant. They described their relationships as expanding their support network and helping them to imagine new possibilities for themselves and their community. Consequently, the participants were inspired to improve Black and Latino relationships in their community.

Dr. King (1992) famously argued, "we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly" (p. 836). The narratives offered by the participants in this study demonstrate the direct and indirect ways they have been impacted by the legacy of White supremacy. The consequences of racist ideologies manifested in their lives by way of horizontal racism, violence, and splintered relationships between Black and Latino males. The men in this study also provided us with stories that remind us of the ties we have to one another. As they were liberated from their pain and deconstructed the negative messages about outgroup males, they were inspired to liberate others. At this time, nations around the world are struggling to combat a pandemic that has the potential to claim millions of lives. This COVID-19 medical crisis has reminded us that we are indeed tied to each other. Our actions, or our inactions, have a ripple effect that affects others. This study, and more importantly, this period of our lives, reminds us that we must be vigilant in cultivating and persevering healthy communities. As the findings from this study revealed, educators have a unique opportunity to contribute to the healthy development of communities. Too often, educational institutions reinforce inequities and perpetuate social ills (Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Dumas, 2014). However, this study shows that educational institutions can also be transformative spaces that create new possibilities and new realities for marginalized students and communities. In order for educational institutions to serve in this capacity, they need educators who are cognizant of the lived realities of our students, and intentionally work to create spaces where students can learn, heal, transform, and thrive.

APPENDIX A: Interview Questions and Protocol

Examining Intergroup Relationships Among Black and Latino Males at Public Four-Year Institutions

Basic Information About the Interview

Name	
Pseudonym	
Race (Circle One)	Black/African American Latino
Class standing	Freshmen Sophomore Junior Senior
Number of years in college	
Major	
Number of Years in MCI Program	
Were you admitted to campus as a Freshmen or Transfer?	
Name of the high school you graduated from?	
High school GPA (circle one)	2.0 or below; 2.1- 2.5; 2.6 – 3.0; 3.1 – 3.5; 3.6 – 4.0; 4.1 or above
Are you a first-generation college student?	

Introduction

- Introduction
- Discuss the purpose of your study
- Discuss the fact that this is a voluntary interview
- Get informed consent signed
- Provide the structure of interview (audio recording, taking notes)
- Ask if the interviewee has questions

Interview Questions

K-12 Context

1) Tell me about the schools you attended (elementary, jr. high, high school).

a. Probe: What were the school's demographics?
b. Probe: What was the school climate? Did folks mix or segregate from each other?

2) While you were growing up, what messages did you receive about Black/Latino males?

a. Probe: Who did you receive the messages from?

b. Probe: Were messages received multiple times? Or was it just once?
c. Probe: What did you think about those messages?

3) While growing up, what were your families (immediate and extended) attitudes toward Black/Latino males?

4) Please describe any interaction you had with your Black/Latino male peers during your K-12 experience. When was the first time you interacted with a Black/Latino peer.

a. Probe: Specify elementary, jr. high, and high school
b. Probe: If they describe having friends of another race: How often did you see each other? What did you speak about?

5) While you were growing up, did you or anyone you were close with, experience hostility or aggression from a member of the Black/Latino community because of your race? If yes, please describe what happened. If no, why do you think this was never an issue?

a. Probe: Was the aggressor a male?
b. Probe: How did this experience make you feel?

6) As you went through your K-12 experience, what thoughts did you have about developing relationships with Black/Latino males?

a. Probe: How if at all, have your thoughts about developing relationships with Latino/Black males change overtime?
b. Probe: What would you say influenced this change in your thoughts?

College Context

1) Why did you choose this university?

2) Tell me about your college experiences so far.

3) Why did you join the Male Centered Initiative on campus?

a. Probe: How would you describe your experience in the MCI

b. Probe: What perception did you have about Black/Latino males before coming to college? See how much it's changed since.

4) How would you describe your relationship with Black/Latino males in the program?

a. Probe: Are the relationships you developed with Latino/Black males in the program different than those you have established with Latino/Black males who are not in the program?

5) The program emphasizes brotherhood, how does the program promote brotherhood between its members?

a. Probe: What does it mean to have a Latino/Black male who is considered a brother?

6) What specific things does the program do to help participants develop relationships across racial differences?

7) If someone were to ask you how their Male Centered Initiative could help facilitate relationships between Black and Latino males, what advice would you give?

8) Is there anything else about Latino/Black male connections or relationships that you would like to share?

9) Is there anything else I did not ask about that you would like to share with me?

Closing Instructions

- Thank the individual
- Assure individual of confidentiality
- If needed, request further interviews
- If asked, comment on how the interviewee will receive results of the study

APPENDIX B: Interview Questions and Protocol For Alumni

Examining Intergroup Relationships Among Black and Latino Males at a Public Four-Year Institution

Basic Information About the Interview

Name	
Pseudonym	
Race (Circle One)	Black/African American Latino
Number of years to graduate	
Major	
Number of Years in MCI Program	
Were you admitted to campus as a Freshmen or Transfer?	
Name of the high school you graduated from?	
High school GPA (circle one)	2.0 or below; 2.1- 2.5; 2.6 – 3.0; 3.1 – 3.5; 3.6 – 4.0; 4.1 or above
Are you a first-generation college student?	

Introduction

- Introduction
- Discuss the purpose of your study
- Discuss the fact that this is a pilot interview
- Get informed consent signed
- Provide the structure of interview (audio recording, taking notes)
- Ask if the interviewee has questions

Interview Questions

K-12 Context

1) Tell me about the schools you attended (elementary, jr. high, high school).

a. Probe: What were the school's demographics?

2) While you were growing up, what messages did you receive about Black/Latino males?

a. Probe: Who did you receive the messages from?

b. Probe: Were messages received multiple times? Or was it just once?

c. Probe: What did you think about those messages?

3) While growing up, what were your families (immediate and extended) attitudes toward Black/Latino males?

4) Please describe any interaction you had with your Black/Latino male peers during your K-12 experience.

a. Probe: Specify elementary, jr. high, and high school

b. Probe: If they describe having friends of another race: How often did you see each other? What did you speak about?

5) While you were growing up, did you or anyone you were close with, experience hostility or aggression from a member of the Black/Latino community because of your race? If yes, please describe what happened. If no, why do you think this was never an issue?

a. Probe: Was the aggressor a male?

b. Probe: How did this experience make you feel?

6) As you went through your K-12 experience, what thoughts did you have about developing relationships with Black/Latino males?

a. Probe: How if at all, have your thoughts about developing relationships with Latino/Black males change overtime?

b. Probe: What would you say influenced this change in your thoughts?

College Context

1) Why did you choose this university?

2) Tell me about your college experiences.

3) Why did you join the Male Centered Initiative on campus?

a. **Probe:** How would you describe your experience in the MCI

4) How would you describe the relationship you had (or have) with Black/Latino males in the program?

a. **Probe:** Are the relationships you developed with Latino/Black males in the program different than those you have established with Latino/Black males who are not in the program?

b. **Probe:** Did the relationships you had with Latino/Black males in the program impact the relationships you currently have with Black/Latino males?

5) The program emphasizes brotherhood, how does the program promote brotherhood between its members?

a. **Probe:** What does it mean to have a Latino/Black male who is considered a brother?

6) What specific things did the program do to help participants develop relationships across racial differences?

7) If someone were to ask you how their Male Centered Initiative could help facilitate relationships between Black and Latino males, what advice would you give?

8) Is there anything else about Latino/Black male connections or relationships that you would like to share?

9) Is there anything else I did not ask about that you would like to share with me?

Closing Instructions

- Thank the individual
- Assure individual of confidentiality
- If needed, request further interviews
- If asked, comment on how the interviewee will receive results of the study

APPENDIX C: Agreement To Participate

in

Examining Intergroup Relationships Among Black and Latino Males at a Public Four-Year Institution

STUDY LEADERSHIP. I am Matthew Smith, a student in the School of Educational Studies at Claremont Graduate University. I am asking you to take part in a research project for my Dissertation. Professor Deborah Faye Carter, the chair of my dissertation, is supervising this study.

PURPOSE. The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of Black and Latino males in a Male Centered Initiatives program designed to build brotherhood and solidarity. More specifically, we seek to understand how Black and Latino males build intergroup relationships across racial differences.

ELIGIBILITY. To take part in this study, you must be a staff member, or a current or former participant in the Male Success Alliance at CSU Dominguez Hills.

PARTICIPATION. During the study, you will be interviewed about your experience in the program. You will be asked to share your experience and perspective on interacting with other students in the program. The interview will last 60 minutes.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION. The risks you run by taking part in this study are minimal, and not higher than those faced in everyday life. The risk includes the possibility that you may be asked questions that may evoke feelings of discomfort. You are free to skip any questions that make you uncomfortable, and you may opt-out of the study at any time without penalty.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION. The study will benefit policymakers, scholars, college administrators, and instructors by providing them with a description of practices that may effectively build relationships between Black and Latino males across racial differences.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop or withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any particular question for any reason without it being held against you. Your decision whether or not to participate will have no effect on your current or future connection with anyone at Claremont Graduate University.

CONFIDENTIALITY: This study will use interviews to help understand the educational experiences of men of color in Male Centered Initiatives. The confidentiality of these data is a priority. No student data will be released to faculty, staff, or other university personnel in order to maintain students' privacy. You will be given the opportunity to review your own interview transcriptions and make revisions prior to me submitting the final paper. All of the data collected will be stored in a locked file drawer in my home.

FURTHER INFORMATION. If you have any questions or would like additional information about this study, please contact Deborah Faye Carter at deborahfaye.carter@cgu.edu. This study

has been certified as exempt from Institutional Review Board coverage, and a copy of this exemption is available upon request. You may keep a copy of this consent form.

CONSENT. By signing below, you are giving your consent to the fact that you understand the information on this form, that any questions you may have about this study have been answered, and that you are eligible and voluntarily agree to participate.

Participant's signature: _____

Print name: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D: Email Invitation to Students

Dear (Student):

As part of a research project, I am conducting interviews with Black and Latino male students who have participated in a Male Centered Initiative (MCI). Programs such as the (Male Success Alliance). This research will ask questions about your early collegiate experiences and experiences connecting with other students on campus. The purpose of this study is to better understand how Black and Latino males establish relationships across racial differences.

The interview is expected to last about 60 minutes. In order to accurately capture the experiences of the interview participants, I will digitally record the individual interview. I would like to coordinate a time that is most convenient for your schedule. I hope that you will be willing to participate and talk with me about your experiences. Thank you for your help in this endeavor, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Matthew Smith
Ph.D. Candidate
Claremont Graduate University

APPENDIX E: Email Invitation to Alumni

Dear (Staff):

As part of a research project, I am conducting interviews with alumni who have participated in a Male-Centered Initiative (MCI). Programs such as the (Male Success Alliance). This research will ask questions about your engagement with students in the program. The purpose of this study is to better understand how Male Centered Initiatives facilitate relationships between Black and Latino males across racial differences.

The interview is expected to last about 60 minutes. In order to accurately capture the experiences of the interview participants, I will digitally record the individual interview. I would like to coordinate a time that is most convenient for your schedule. I hope that you will be willing to participate and talk with me about your experiences. Thank you for your help in this endeavor, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Matthew Smith
Ph.D. Candidate
Claremont Graduate University

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