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Disparities In Status In Intimate Partner Violence

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DISPARITIES IN STATUS IN INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

A Thesis

by

JUAN GUILLERMO PÉREZ

Submitted to Texas A&M International University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

May 2019

Major Subject: Sociology

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Approved as style and content by:

Chair of Committee,	Marcus Antonius Ynalvez John C. Kilburn
Committee Members,	Fei Luo Joseph García
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ABSTRACT

Disparities in Intimate Partner Violence (May 2019)

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Chair of Committee: Drs. Marcus A. Ynalvez and John C. Kilburn

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a pervasive public health issue that is unfortunately universal throughout different social groups and cultural contexts. The issue of IPV among Latino has recently caught the attention of researchers; however, studies pertaining to Latino men who have sex with men (LMSM) remain virtually unexplored. The objective of this thesis in sociology is to understand how disparities in ascribed and in achieved statuses among LMSM couples impact mechanisms of IPV, and if affective (e.g., emotional) and instrumental (e.g., financial) mechanisms shape the form and the severity of IPV. Furthermore, this thesis is aimed at filling a gap in the literature, identifying unique features of LMSM-IPV, and challenging misconceptions of LMSM-IPV. This thesis seeks to find how power dynamics are defined and expressed through disparities in ascribed and in achieved statuses among LMSM couples. This thesis' core hypothesis is: differences in ascribed and in achieved statuses impact the form and severity IPV; furthermore, mechanisms of IPV may or may not mediate between the relationship between these disparities and aspects of IPV. Variables were analyzed using a binary logistic regression. The findings of this study indicate that only disparity of ascribed status and mechanisms of IPV were associated in severe IPV. These findings are important studies of IPV seldom focus on double minorities such as LMSM. Using these findings can help produce effective prevention and intervention programs that are inclusive and culturally sensitive to the needs of LMSM.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Disparities in Status in Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a major public health issue that threatens the wellbeing of individuals, families, and ultimately, society as a whole. Although views and definitions of IPV have evolved, it has remained a ubiquitous problem throughout time and across societies. Though often “invisible”, the conditions for IPV are deeply entrenched in societies, so much so that these conditions have shaped gender roles and socialization (Brown 2008). Studies reveal that 25-30% of women in the United States (U.S.) are at risk of IPV. This is substantial when one considers that instances of IPV among Latinos have been reported to be as high as 53% (Cuevas, Chiara & Millosi 2012).

It is typically observed that Mexican Americans, the largest subgroup of the Hispanic community, have higher rates of IPV in comparison to non-Hispanic White and other racial/ethnic minorities (Cummings, Gonzalez-Guarda, & Sandoval 2012). The projected changes in the demographics of the U.S. population has brought more attention to IPV as an issue in Hispanic communities. Hispanics represent about 16% of the U.S. population and are projected to grow to 25% (Cummings et al. 2012). While the focus on Latino communities have helped researchers and policymakers gain better understanding of Latino IPV, studies on the matter have been very limited as they have been done in an almost exclusively heterosexual context. The objectives of this thesis are to: 1) identify how disparities in ascribed status and disparities in achieved status impact the form and the severity of Latino men who have sex with men (LMSM) IPV

This thesis follows the model of *American Sociological Review*.

, 2) examine whether emotional and/or economic mechanisms mediate between disparity in status and IPV, 3) and lastly, fill the gap in the literature by, identifying unique features of LMSM IPV and critiquing those misconceptions of IPV in LMSM.

Research in LMSM is not only valuable but necessary in developing an accurate understanding of IPV as a whole. Unfortunately, research in MSM-IPV has yielded mixed results. This is likely due, in part, to lack of standardized measures of IPV within LMSM, and the predominantly heterosexual studies that define IPV as an exclusively heterosexual experience. Estimates of IPV in same sex couples ranges from 12-45% (Craft & Serovich 2005; Stephenson, Sato & Finneran 2013; Stephenson & Finneran 2016). The inconsistencies are in part due to a lack of standardized definition or measuring tool of same-sex IPV. Inconsistencies aside, studies have shed light on the heightened risk of IPV within same sex dyads. The heightened risk of IPV amongst sexual and racial-ethnic minorities puts people with overlapping social statuses at greater risk.

There are two major problems in current Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender & Queer (LGBTQ) IPV literature: 1) models and theories of IPV in MSM are derived from heterosexual populations (Finneran & Stephenson 2014); 2) the majority of studies do not include a significant amount of people of color; Latinos, in particular, are rarely represented. IPV in MSM has been neglected. Largely, the intersection between minority identities and statuses has been grossly underrepresented (Balsam 2011). The dearth of studies on Latino MSM and other minorities is part of the reason why there are so many misconceptions about same sex IPV. Filling the gap in literature is extremely important as the lack of understanding exacerbates the problem as it leaves victims with few viable options to resolve their situation.

The very definition of IPV has been defined as an exclusively heterosexual occurrence leaving LGBTQ victims without the adequate resource or protection. This is problematic as it

masks many risk factors that are unique to MSM. The majority of the articles (85%) that have been dedicated to the public health of LGBTQ individuals do not include the race-ethnicity of respondents (Balsam 2011). Furthermore, studies focusing on LGBTQ IPV seldom explore the intersections in identity and minority status. Given that violence seems to be substantially higher in both Latinxs and MSM, it is crucial to investigate indicators of IPV amongst men who belong to two or more minority groups.

Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is the physical, psychological, and sexual harm by current or former partner (McClennen, Summers & Vaughan 2002; Truman & Morgan 2014). The different dimensions of IPV (physical, psychological, and sexual) are expressed in various forms and typically occur simultaneously. Physical IPV can be expressed by subjecting intimate partner to kicking, punching, scratching and using objects to inflict physical harm. Rates of IPV are higher among Latinos/Hispanics (23%) in comparison to non-Hispanic Whites (15%) (Caetano et al. 2004); the same study also found Hispanics report higher instances of severe IPV.

While the aforementioned studies reflect the rates of IPV in Hispanic heterosexual couples, they provide an important insight on the heightened risk of IPV among Hispanics that may extend to LMSM. Research suggests that IPV is just as, if not more, pervasive among same-sex couples, especially among MSM. Thirty-three percent of LMSM reported physical violence.

Psychological IPV, also referred to as *emotional abuse*, is characterized by verbal maltreatment, degradation, and threats (Rakovec-Felser 2014). Psychological IPV is often regarded as less threatening; however, it is important to note that psychological IPV is an enduring pattern of controlling behaviors as a form of expressing power and control over the other individual (Woodyatt & Stephenson 2016). The Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that 35.6% of women and 28.5% of men, in the U.S., have experienced physical and psychological

harm by their intimate partner (Sugg 2015). It is yet unclear as to how many MSM are affected by psychological IPV; however, estimates are as high as 73%.

Disparities in Status

In both heterosexual and same sex couples IPV, power dynamics are of interest particularly when there are major disparities in status or imbalances in the bases of power. Research suggests that inequalities within a dyad (i.e., a couple) can often be linked to violence in two ways: 1) They create an imbalance in power, and 2) that imbalance makes it difficult for someone to leave the relationship (Goldenberg et al., 2016).

That said, it is argued that that *disparities in ascribed status* between individuals in a relationship such as age, immigration status, and ethnoracial identity; *disparities in achieved status* between individuals in a relationship such as educational attainment, income, and outness¹ can set the conditions in which one partner's minority identity can be leveraged against him. In turn, that leverage in identity influences the form and the severity of IPV in the relationship.

That said, this thesis focuses on disparity in ascribed and in achieved status within the couple such as age, educational attainment, and income; however, unique elements to LMSM such as outness, physical traits, and citizenship were also explored. The misconception that MSM are equally matched in terms of physical traits and social status, for example, is harmful as it creates a narrative as to who can and cannot be a victim of IPV (Brown, 2008).

Disparities in Ascribed Status

It is important to define ascribed status as it is an integral component of intimate partner violence in Latino men who have sex with men (LMSM). Ascribed status can be defined as a social position that is assigned to an individual or a group of individuals (Scott & Marshall 2004).

¹ Outness can be defined as the degree in which an individual is open about his or her sexual orientation to friends, family, employers, and other people in their environment.

Typically, the status that the person is assigned is beyond an individual's control. That is to say that an ascribed status is usually inborn, innate, lifelong, inevitable, and difficult to change. Gender, racial/ethnic identity, and age are examples of ascribed statuses.

Gender has often been cited as an indicator for IPV among heterosexual couples. This is to say that gender, being female in particular, increases the likelihood of IPV in heterosexual relationships. After all, gender roles are ubiquitous in society, and they serve as a pre-existing template of gender roles and stereotypes that heterosexual couples often adhere to. In short, they provide cues and an outline of acceptable behaviors, expectations, and the overall power dynamic between the members of the dyad. However, this study is interested in examining relationships in which both members are of the same gender and what determines the power dynamics of the relationship.

This study moves away from the assumption that men in same sex relationships are equally matched both equally and socially (Dworkin et al. 2017; Brown 2008) and examine disparity in ascribed and in achieved status within the dyad. Disparity in age, race/ethnicity, citizenship status, and physical traits are all used to assign and enforce traditional gender roles within MSM. In spite of having two males in the relationship, traditional gender roles are still emulated, negotiated, and based on disparity in ascribed status within the couple.

Ethnoracial identity is another form of ascribed status. As earlier, Latinos have a higher likelihood of reporting IPV compared to other groups. It is important to note that these findings typically do not take other aspects of Latino identity into consideration. Ostensibly, LMSM in which both men are Latino should have a considerably lower disparity among the two. However, Latino is an umbrella term that does not account for the diversity of race, ethnicity, and other ascribed statuses that exists within the group.

For example, Mismatched levels of acculturation are cited as risk factors of intimate partner violence within Hispanic heterosexual couples (Caetano et al. 2004). Higher levels of acculturation amongst Hispanics served as risk factors for perpetration of IPV. This is in part due to the differences in values, acceptance for gender roles, and socioeconomic status. As such, it is important to take subtle but important differences that exist in the Latino group, such as acculturation, ethnicity, and race into account. These subtle differences are important as they may provide insight into the high prevalence of IPV in Latinos.

Another example of an ascribed status is citizenship or lack thereof. Differences in citizen or immigration status can be used to define roles and power dynamics within the couple. The threat of deportation combined with the language barriers and the lack of a proximate familial/social support may then set the conditions for IPV (Fuchsel et al. 2012). Conversely, studies have also found that non-recent immigrants with poor English-speaking skills are at high risk of perpetration in comparison to recent immigrants with high English-speaking proficiency (Gupta et al. 2010).

Machismo a cultural norm that characterizes men as strong and dominant. Conversely, *marianismo* sustains the idea of women being passive and submissive. (Cianelli et al. 2013). *Machismo* and *marianismo* are integral to Latin-American culture. These templates of traditional masculinity and femininity can further contribute to men in same-sex relationships to compete for the “*Alpha*” or *dominant* position in the relationship. This would be consistent with Dworkin et al. (2017) idea of MSM negotiating masculinity in a heteronormative context. Consequences of disparity in ascribed status is the manifestation of IPV in several forms such physical, sexual, and psychological violence (Dworkin et al. 2017).

To a greater extent, a mismatch in race within the relationship is a disparity in ascribed status that may induce power differentials that are structurally generated (Dworkin et al. 2017;

Carbone-Lopez 2012). Studies reveal that interracial relationships have higher rates of IPV when compared to monoracial couples (Chartier and Caetano 2012; Brownridge 2016). Not only are the rates higher in interracial relationships but they also report higher instances of severe IPV. Thus, members of interracial relationships may attempt to establish or maintain dominance using violence as a conflict resolution strategy. The differences in status create conflict and a need to resolve or cope with the conflict.

Age, in general, has been negatively associated with IPV; the risk of violence within heterosexual couples decreases with age (Stephenson et al. 2013; Suarez et al. 2018). Stephenson et al. (2013) suggests that having an older partner decreases the likelihood of violence within heterosexual couples. However, the same does not appear to be true for male-male relationships. Older men in same sex couples appear to use violence as means of controlling and dominating the younger member of the dyad (Goldenberg, Stephenson, Freeland, Finneran, & Hadley 2016).

Studies on disparities in ascribed status do not typically include and account for physical characteristics or traits; however, these physical traits and stature may be used for MSM to legitimize and justify their role in sex and in the relationship. For example, a tall muscular man is more likely to assigned more masculine traits than his less physically imposing partner. The dominant partner can use his imposing physical stature to intimidate his partner.

Disparities in Achieved Status

Unlike ascribed status, achieved status is merit based; it is earned. Essentially, a person should have more control over his or her achieved status. Nevertheless, it is important to once again mention that a person's or group's ascribed status can affect the opportunities and resources available to achieve a higher status. Examples of achieved status are educational attainment, income, and job prestige, to name a few; however, this study will also take into account non-traditional notions of achieved status that may be unique to the MSM population.

Education is a highly valued capital as it often leads to access to better resources and other prospects that may boost an individual's status. In other words, a higher level of education usually translates to a higher level of status. Low educational attainment is often associated with low status, which can be associated with adverse outcomes such as an increased likelihood of IPV (Brownridge 2016).

College graduates, for example, are (30%) less likely to report or perpetrating IPV than those with a high school education (Cunradi, Caetano, Schafer 2002; Stephenson et al. 2011). Although the role of educational attainment in IPV has been assessed in multiple studies, disparity in educational attainment within the couple has not. It is important to assess the disparity in educational attainment within LMSM since they define the power dynamics of the relationship. Great disparity in traditional achieved statuses such as education or income within the couple is associated with a higher threat of violence (Goldenberg et al. 2016).

Income is associated with IPV in both heterosexual and LMSM couples. The achieved status of educational attainment is typically associated with income. Hispanics living in low SES neighborhoods are twice as likely to report IPV (Caetano, Schafer & Curandi 2001). In another quantitative cross-sectional study, Caetano et al. (2000) suggests that IPV is highest amongst Hispanics with low household annual incomes (< \$20,000 per annum). Another study found that male unemployment was also a predictor of IPV (Caetano et al. 2000; Caetano, Nelson, & Curandi 2010).

Furthermore, disparity in income are also associated with intimate partner violence. According to Moreno (2011), a person's financial dependence on their partner may increase the likelihood of victimization. The partner with poor financial prospects may struggle to find the resources needed to leave the violent relationship. Though there is plenty of research citing the

high association between low income and IPV, the dimension of income disparity within LMSM and its association to IPV one of the focuses of this study.

Mechanisms of IPV

Mechanisms of IPV, casted in this study within the Weberian framework of the rational (or instrumental/ financial) and irrational (or affective/ emotional), refer to the revolving theme surrounding disputes between members of the dyad. Much like those applied to heterosexual couples, LMSM arguments revolve around financial stressors such as bills and financial contributions; and romantic-partner-related stressors such as jealousy and infidelity. Mechanisms of IPV in LMSM is built upon Woulfe and Goodman's (2018) concept of identity abuse. Woulfe and Goodman define identity abuse as tactics used by partner to leverage systematic oppression such as racism, ableism, and sexism to inflict harm onto their partner (2018). As such, mechanisms of IPV in MSM can be described as the advantage a partner uses against the other during a dispute to establish control or express power. Identity abuse, therefore, sets the stage for the mechanism of IPV that a partner may use over the other.

Mechanisms of IPV can be defined as hostile but non-violent advantage of partner's minority status in a way that may threaten the partner's ability to maintain or obtain resources. The two categories of mechanisms of IPV (i.e., financial and emotional) utilize how the partner's minority status is used against in a way that is damaging or harmful to his access to economic resources or emotional support, respectively. These conflict resolution strategies may be used as a way to gain, maintain control, or dominate the relationship.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL MODEL

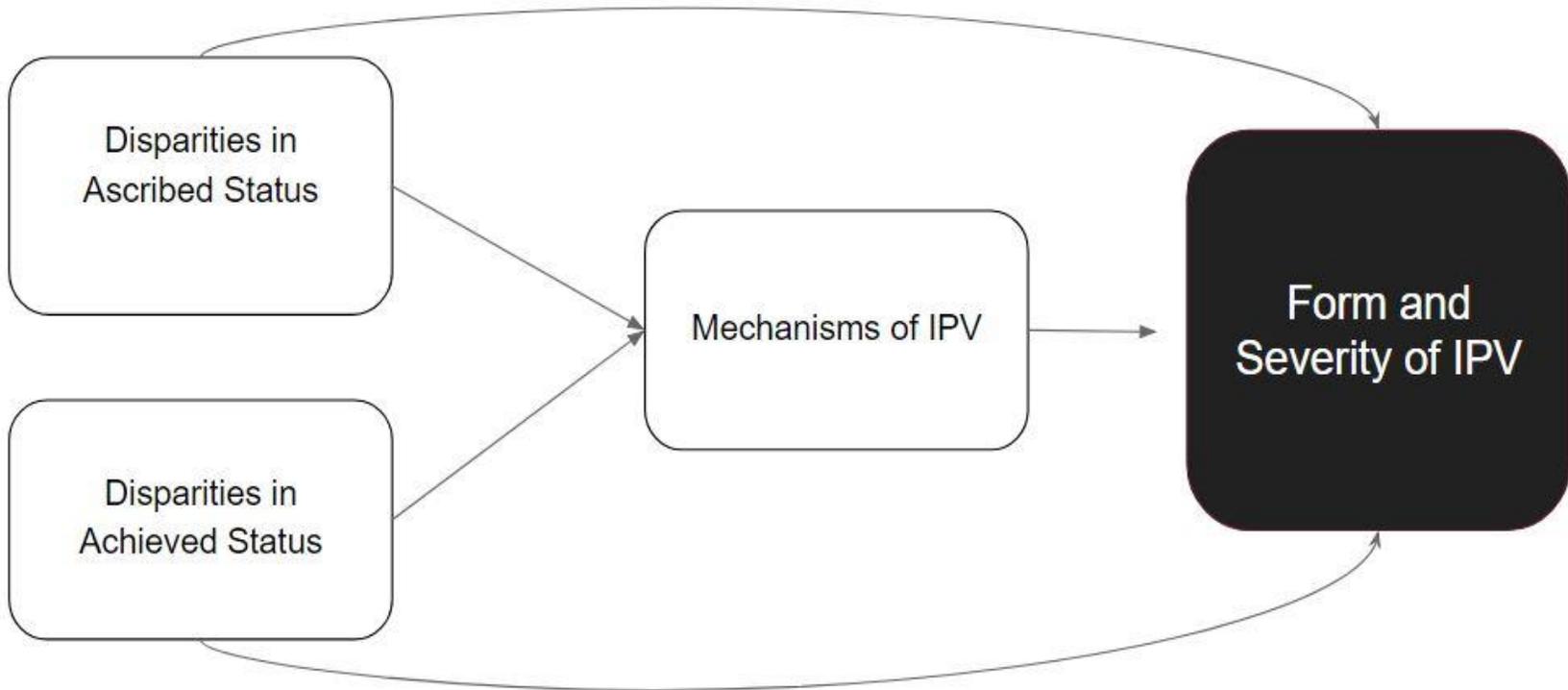
The theoretical model for this thesis in sociology (see Figure 1) consists of two independent constructs; *disparities in ascribed status between couple, and disparities in achieved status between couple*; the mediating constructs mechanisms of IPV, also referred to as leverage, and the dependent construct pertaining to the form and the severity of intimate partner violence. Thus, this theoretical model holds that disparities in ascribed and in achieved status between the couple create power differential, which are leveraged and used to influence the form and the severity of IPV that will be used in a conflict between the couple.

The unit of analysis for which this theoretical model was applied was at the individual level of analysis, although information about the dyadic pair (i.e., individual and partner) were gathered. In other words, information was collected and generated at the individual level but the substance and content of the information essentially pertained to the members of the dyadic pair. In terms of assumption, this theoretical model is based on the assumption that IPV is a form of micro-level conflict whereby that conflict is nothing accidental nor intentional, but often times consciously applied by members of the dyadic members to gain influence and establish power over the other. This assumption takes the tone and the cue from the work of Randall Collin's work in terms of the nature of micro-conflict theory; it is also inspired by the work of Max Weber on the multidimensionality of the concepts of status and of power (Ritzer & Stepnisky 2018).

Core Hypothesis

Disparities in ascribed and in achieved status impact the form and the severity of IPV; however, this impact may either be mediated or not mediated by mechanisms of IPV (or leverage). These core hypothesis is translated to more specific forms which are given below:

Figure 1. Theoretical Model Depicting the Relationship between Disparities in Status, Mechanisms of IPV, and IPV



H1: LMSM couples with large disparities in achieved status will have a higher likelihood of severe IPV.

H2: LMSM couples with large disparities in ascribed status will have a higher likelihood of severe IPV.

H3: LMSM couples with large disparities in achieved status will have a higher likelihood of severe IPV when financial mechanism of IPV is present.

H3A: LMSM couples with large disparities in achieved status will have a higher likelihood of severe IPV when affective mechanism of IPV is present.

H4: LMSM couples with large disparities in ascribed will have a higher likelihood of severe IPV when financial mechanism of IPV is present.

H4A: LMSM couples with large disparities in ascribed status will have a higher likelihood of severe IPV when affective mechanism of IPV is present.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

For respondents, participation in this study is based on several inclusion criteria. First, the respondents must be an adult 18 years or older. Second, the respondents must be a male of Latino origin excluding Spanish and Brazilian respondents. This exclusion helps minimize the impact of extraneous variables such as language and geographical differences, and ultimately protect the study against threats to internal and external validity (Kerlinger & Lee 2007). Third, the respondents must have or have had an ongoing relationship with another man for a minimum of two months within a year of the survey².

Target Population and Units of Analysis

For this thesis the target population comprises Latino men 18 years or older who have sex with men, and are in or have been in a relationship for a minimum of two months within a year before the survey. Although data was solicited using a sample of the target population described above, data and information was gathered for both members of the couple (i.e., respondent and his partner). A respondent with multiple partners was asked to choose his most important partner. This ensured that all the answers pertain to the one respondent and one partner. With this thesis' emphasis and focus on disparities in status, the unit of analysis is not the individual respondent; instead, it is the dyadic pair that comprise the respondent and his partner.

Study Location

Although members of the target population will be United States residents, this study was not bound to a physical location. Instead, the target population comprised an online community on

² No distinction is made between cohabitating and non-cohabitating couples as some LMSM may conceal their sexual identity to others and may not cohabitate.

Facebook™, a social media platform. Given that the subject matter of this study is sensitive, an online survey (within a Facebook community of friends, and friends of friends) was employed instead of a face-to-face interview. This data collection strategy both protected the study from threats internal validity due to social desirability bias and reactivity, and minimizes cost in terms of money, resources, and time (Sue & Ritter 2012).

Recruitment of Respondents and Study Design

The survey questionnaire for this study was posted online via Facebook™. As such, people who were Facebook™ friends to the researcher were among the first to be recruited, and the friends of these friends were the second-degree respondents. Respondents fitting the inclusion criteria were asked to participate in the study; however, the recruitment post asked those who did not fit the criteria to share the posting so that other potential respondents could see it.

Administrators of LGBTQ- friendly Facebook™ groups and pages such as *Equality Texas-Laredo*, *South Texas LGBTQ Coalition*, and *Campus Ally Network (TAMIU)* were asked via personal Facebook™ message to share the survey link with their followers. Reaching out to administrators for Facebook™ groups and pages is effective for building a sampling frame (Bhutta 2012). However, it is worth noting that out of four organizations that were asked to participate in the study, only two responded and posted the survey. In essence, this strategy of asking online friends to share with their online platform is a form of snowball sampling via an online setting. Although not a random sampling technique, snowball sampling is an effective method of studying hard-to-reach populations (Baltar 2012), such as the one for this study.

Survey Measurement

The 47-item survey questionnaire used for this study consisted of four sections which solicited information pertaining to sociodemographics of respondents, the achieved and the ascribed characteristics of both members of the partnership (i.e., respondent and his partner), and occurrences of IPV, respectively. The *sociodemographic information* section consists of seven

screening questions. These questions were used to assess whether respondents met the inclusion criteria outlined for this study.. Respondents who met the inclusion criteria were allowed to continue to the next section of the survey; however, those who did not, were allowed to complete the rest of the screening questions but the survey was automatically submitted at the end of the section.

For example, respondents were asked to respond to the question “*What is your race/ethnicity?*” to which they will be given the following options “*A) Latinx; B) Asian; C) Black; D) Non-Hispanic White; E) Other*”. Respondents who did not select *Latino* were allowed to complete the section, but were disqualified from participating in the rest of the survey as they do not fit the inclusion criteria

Independent Variables

The second section of the survey measured *disparities in ascribed status* and *in achieved status* in LMSM. The two independent constructs of this study, *disparities in achieved and in ascribed status* were measured by asking respondents to respond to questions about both the respondent himself and his partner.

Measuring disparities in ascribed status

The survey questionnaire included 10 items pertaining to ascribed status. The five variables used to measure the construct of disparity in ascribed status were disparities in age, citizenship, race, degree of masculinity, and degree of attractiveness. Variables such as disparities in citizenship, degree of masculinity, and race were measured using a survey question each of which applied a binary coding. Cases with no racial disparity were assigned a 0, while cases with racial disparity were assigned a 1. Respondents were asked to answer the question “*Are you and your partner the same race/ethnicity?*” Responses to the question are “yes” (1), “no” (0), and “I don’t know” (coded as missing value).

Degree of masculinity ³and degree of attractiveness followed a more complex coding scheme. For degree of masculinity, respondents were asked to choose an answer from the following: 1) *I am considered more masculine than my partner*, 2) *My partner is considered more masculine than I*, 3) *We are both considered masculine*, 4) *We are both considered effeminate*, 5) *I don't know*.

Table 1. Degree of Masculinity

	Respondent	Partner	Coding
I am considered more masculine than my partner.	Masculine	Feminine	1
My partner is considered more masculine than I	Feminine	Masculine	2
We are both considered masculine.	Masculine	Masculine	3
We are both considered feminine.	Feminine	Feminine	4
I don't know	-	-	5

Note: Table 1 lists all the potential responses on a nominal scale. These values do not yet hold any numerical significance.

The next step was to transforming the nominal values into meaningful numerical values. All potential responses, as listed on Table 1.1, were assigned a numerical value of either 0, 1, or 2.

³ Degree of masculinity was treated as a ratio level measure. Degree of masculinity refers to number of masculine personalities in the LMSM dyad.

LMSM whereby both members were considered effeminate were coded as 0. Any case with a disparity in masculinity between respondent and his partner (i.e. masculine-feminine or feminine-masculine) was coded as 1. LMSM in which both partners were masculine was coded as 3. No distinction is made between masculine-feminine and feminine-masculine relationship; instead, the study focuses on if there was disparity.

However, a distinction was made between effeminate-effeminate (fem-fem) and masculine-masculine (masc-masc) couples as express on Table 1.1. This is because high levels of masculinity is predicted to be an indicator of IPV. As such, having two LMSM which consider themselves to be masculine in the relationship is worth distinguishing as it may be more likely that they are higher risk for IPV. The same measurement strategy and rule were applied to measure degree of attractiveness.

Table 1.1 Degree of Masculinity (New Coding)

	Respondent	Partner	New Coding
We are both considered feminine.	Feminine	Feminine	0
My partner is considered more masculine than I	Feminine	Masculine	1
I am considered more masculine than my partner.	Masculine	Feminine	1
We are both considered masculine.	Masculine	Masculine	2
I don't know	-	-	Missing Value

To measure age disparity, respondents were asked to two questions: “*What is your age?*”, and “*What is your partner's age?*” to which they were given the following choices (which were

automatically coded as 1-6 on SPSS): 1) 18-24 years old, 2) 25-34 years old, 3) 35-44 years old, 4) 45-54 years old, 5) 55-64 years old, 6) 65-74 years old years or older. Because age brackets were used to document age, the midpoint for the age brackets were calculated by computing the average of the highest and the lowest values. For example, people in the 18-24 age bracket had a midpoint of 21 which was obtained with the following calculations: $(18 + 24) / 2$. The midpoint was calculated every age bracket. Age disparity was calculated by using of the absolute value of the respondent's age minus his partner's age (i.e., $|(age\ of\ respondent) - (age\ of\ partner)|$). Similar calculations were applied to other disparities of ascribed status.

Disparities in Achieved Status

Achieved status was assessed by using the following three variables: educational disparity, employment disparity, and financial disparity. As previously mentioned, the majority of the survey questions required the respondent to answer for him and his partner. For example, the respondent was asked two questions pertaining to the educational achievement. The questions "*What is the highest level of education completed?*" followed by the question "*What is your partner's highest level of education completed?*" were used to assess disparity in achieved status within the dyad. The respondent was required to select one of the following responses for both questions 1) *Some High school or less*; 2) *High school diploma*; 3) *Associate's Degree*; 4) *Bachelor's degree*; 5) *Masters, Professional, Doctorates Degree*.

The original variables are coded and assigned a number from 1-5. The numbers have no numerical value, yet. Since the initial raw data consist of string variables, meaning they are not quantifiable, they must be converted into a numerical value. Thus, the constructs on the nominal scale (1-5) must be assigned numbers with actual numerical meaning. Time brackets were generated using previous knowledge of years in spent in school. For example, it takes the average person about 12 years to complete high school. As such, average was calculated using the minimum amount of time to complete high school and the highest amount of time and then divided

that number by 2. The responses for the two questions will be compared to each other. This was done for every education level for both respondent and partner. The average/midpoint of every educational category were coded. A new variable, Education disparity was created by taking the absolute value of the education level of the partner minus his partner's education level (Educational disparity = $| \text{edu (resp)} - \text{edu (part)} |$). This was the method used to calculate the rest of the disparity in achieved status variables.

Dependent and Mediating Variables

This study utilized Straus et al. (1996) Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS-2). The CTS-2 measures four domains of victimization: assault, injury, psychological aggression, and sexual coercion. This study focused on physical assault and psychological aggression. Study respondents responded to an 8-point Likert scale in which 0 indicates it never happened and 7 indicates it has happened just not in the past year.

Two items were used to measure the domain of severe physical violence, and another two items for psychological aggression. For example, severe physical aggression was examined by asking respondents to rate the following statement on an 8-point Likert scale where 0= this never happened, 1= once in the past year, 2= twice in the past year, 3= 3-5 times in the past year, 4= 6-10 times in the past year, 5= 11-20 times in the past year, 6= more than 20 times in the past year, 7= not in the past year, but it has happened before.

To further exemplify, respondents were asked to respond to the following: *In the last two months, my partner punched, kicked, or beat me up.* Of interest to this study was *ever prevalence of physical assault*. As such, for instances when respondents responded 0 were coded as 0 and for instances when the respondents responded anywhere between 1 and 7, inclusive, were coded as 1. A 0 indicated that there was no occurrence in physical assault while a 1 indicate the occurrence of a physical assault. This is done for both the respondent and his partner. A new variable was created to combine both the respondent and his partner's scores.

The new variable CTASP2 (a label as suggested by the CTS-2) was calculated by adding the score of the respondent and the score of the partner (CTASP2 = RESP + PART). It was important to add a number or a letter at the end of CTASP as it was not the final variable for analysis. Since this study was only interested in whether or not there was physical aggression, the new variable was coded.

Instances in which neither the respondent or the partner engaged in physical assault was coded 0, instances in which the respondent engaged in physical assault and the partner did not was coded 1, instances in which there respondents who did not engage physical assault, but the partner did was also be labeled as 1, and lastly situations in which both partners engaged in physical assault was mutual was coded 1. The same process was followed to calculate the ever prevalence of psychological aggression and the mediating variables (financial mechanisms of IPV and affective mechanisms of IPV).

Analytical Strategy

The results for this research were generated using descriptive statistical analytical techniques and a set of binary logistic regression models with and without mediating effects. The binary logistic regression approach estimates the relationship between a dichotomous nominal level of measurement dependent variable (e.g., a “yes” vs. “no” or “present” vs. “absent” or “occurred” vs. “did not occur” responses) and one or more independent variables (e.g., age, sex, etc.). Furthermore, binary logistic regressions take outliers into account without skewing the data as opposed to a linear regression as the categories are simplified into discrete binary and/or dichotomous categories.

The general equation for the binary logistic regression model for this thesis is of the following form:

$$\ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = B_0 + B_1X_1 + \dots + B_kX_k$$

where p is the probability of an event (e.g., occurrence of an IPV or not) subject to the constraint that $0 \leq p < 1$, B_0, B_1, \dots, B_k the regression estimates, and X_1, \dots, X_k as the set of independent variables such as disparities in age.

The mediation effect of a set of variables is estimated by first casting the mediating variables as dependent variables, and then treating by including these mediating variables to the original set of independent variables to form a new set of predictors on the ultimate dependent variables. In this thesis, variables associated with the IPV mechanisms were the mediating variables while disparities in ascribed and in achieved status are the independent variables. Variables pertaining to the form and the severity of IPV are the ultimate dependent variables.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Ever Occurrence of Mechanisms of IPV

Table 3 describes the relationship between disparities in ascribed status and achieved status variables, and mechanisms of IPV. Mechanisms of IPV refers to members of LMSM using their status or their partner's minority status against them to establish control over their partner. Thus, Occurrence mechanisms of IPV refers to how many times, if any, an individual has used financial or affective leverage over his partner during the referent period, which in this case is defined as 2 months. A binary logistic regression was used to examine the relationship between disparities in ascribed statuses and in achieved statuses, and the two mechanisms of violence (i.e., financial and affective). Together, the variables that represent the two sets of disparities in statuses comprise the independent variables. The independent variables are *disparities in ascribed status* and *disparities in achieved status*, and the dependent variable is *ever occurrence of financial mechanisms of IPV*.

The results from table 3 reveal that only two variables of disparities in ascribed status had significant associations with mechanisms of IPV. The first variables was citizenship disparity ($B = +1.45$; $p < 0.001$; $\exp(B) = 4.27$) which had a positive association with occurrence of financial mechanisms of IPV. LMSM with citizenship disparity were four times more likely to have financial mechanisms of IPV occur in their relationship as opposed to non-disparate LMSM. However, the same could not be said for the relationship between citizenship disparity and affective mechanisms of IPV. The results yielded that there was no significant ($B = +0.38$; $p > 0.3350$; $\exp(B) = 1.47$) relationship between the two variables (citizenship disparity and affective mechanisms of IPV).

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Citizenship status (0= no, 1= yes)	221	0.21	0.41	0	01
Race disparity (0= no, 1= yes)	220	0.23	0.42	0	01
Degree of masculinity (0 = fem-fem 1= masc-fem, fem-mas, 2= masc-masc)	213	1.24	0.63	0	02
Degree of attractiveness (0= no, 1= yes)	202	0.57	0.49	0	01
Age disparity (absolute difference in year)	221	4.93	7.06	0	30
Educational disparity (absolute difference in educational attainment)	221	2.55	2.69	0	9.5
Employment disparity (absolute difference in hours worked per week)	221	12.19	14.85	0	40
Financial disparity (0= no, 1= yes)	222	0.81	0.96	0	03
Financial Mechanisms of IPV (0= no, 1= yes)	221	0.28	0.45	0	01
Affective Mechanisms of IPV (0= no, 1= yes)	221	0.48	0.50	0	01

Table 3 Logistic Regression Results for Financial and Affective Mechanisms of IPV

	Financial Mechanisms of IPV				Affective Mechanisms of IPV			
	B	p-value	Exp(B)	S.E.	B	p-value	Exp(B)	S.E.
Citizenship Status Disparity (0 = no, 1= yes)	+1.45	0.000***	4.27	0.39	+0.38	0.3350	1.47	0.40
Race disparity (0 = no, 1 = yes)	+0.28	0.3950	1.32	0.39	+0.80	0.0420*	2.24	0.39
Degree of masculinity (0 = fem-fem 1= masc-fem, fem-masc, 2= masc-masc)	-0.24	0.2700	0.78	0.27	-0.05	0.8330	0.94	0.25
Degree of attractiveness (0= no, 1 = yes)	+0.31	0.3600	1.37	0.36	+0.59	0.0700	1.80	0.32
Age disparity (absolute difference in years)	+0.00	0.8390	1.00	0.27	+0.05	0.0530	1.05	0.26
Educational disparity (absolute difference in educational attainment ⁴)	+0.00	0.0670	1.00	0.06	-0.08	0.2130	0.92	0.06
Employment disparity (absolute difference in hours worked per week)	+0.00	0.5410	1.00	0.01	+0.01	0.1290	1.01	0.01
Financial disparity (0= no, 1 = yes)	+0.32	0.1750	1.37	0.17	+0.31	0.0690	1.36	0.17
Constant/intercept	-1.553	0.0010	0.78	0.27	+0.02	0.8730	0.93	0.42
Nagelkerke r ²	0.175				0.211			

* denotes significance at the 0.05 type- I error rate ($p < .05$)

** denotes significance at the 0.01 type- I error rate ($p < .01$)

***denotes significance at the .001 type- I error rate ($p < .001$)

⁴ Educational attainment is calculated in the amount of years it takes to complete each degree.

Table 4 Logistic Regression Results for Severe Physical Assault and Severe Psychological Aggression

	Severe Physical Assault								Severe Psychological Aggression							
	M1				M2				M1				M2			
	B	p-value	Exp(B)	S.E.	B	P-value	Exp(B)	S.E.	B	p-value	Exp(B)	S.E.	B	p-value	Exp(B)	S.E.
Citizenship Disparity (0 = no, 1 = yes)	+0.80	0.0420*	2.23	0.39	+0.38	0.4210	1.47	0.48	+0.00	0.9990	1.00	0.37	-0.34	0.4140	0.71	0.41
Race disparity (0 = no, 1 = yes)	-0.19	0.6460	0.82	0.41	-0.75	0.1190	0.47	0.48	-0.19	0.5980	0.82	0.36	-0.44	0.2540	0.64	0.39
Degree of masculinity (0 = fem-fem 1= masc-fem, fem-masc, 2= masc-masc)	-0.04	0.8730	0.95	0.27	+0.16	0.6340	1.17	0.34	-0.30	0.1990	0.74	0.23	-0.28	0.2410	0.75	0.24
Degree of attractiveness (0= no, 1 = yes)	+0.62	0.0900	1.87	0.37	+0.47	0.2690	1.60	0.42	+0.48	0.1220	1.62	0.31	+0.36	0.2680	1.44	0.32
Age disparity (absolute difference in years)	0.05*	0.0370	1.05	0.02	+0.04	0.0900	1.05	0.02	+0.02	0.3700	1.02	0.02	+0.01	0.6210	0.71	0.02
Educational disparity (absolute difference in educational attainment)	+0.00	0.9700	0.99	0.06	+0.03	0.6960	1.03	0.08	-0.3	0.6180	0.97	0.06	-0.01	0.7650	0.98	0.06
Employment disparity (absolute difference in hours worked per week)	+0.00	0.6070	1.00	0.01	+0.00	0.9780	1.00	0.01	+0.00	0.7780	1.00	0.01	-0.00	0.9080	0.99	0.01
Financial disparity (0= no, 1 = yes)	-0.05	0.7610	0.94	0.18	-0.39	0.0950	0.67	0.23	+0.24	0.1350	1.27	0.16	+0.14	0.3950	1.15	0.17
Financial Mechanisms (0= no, 1= yes)	-	-	-	-	+1.36***	0.0000	3.91	0.42	-	-	-	-	+0.74	0.0540	2.09	0.38
Affective Mechanisms (0= no, 1= yes)	-	-	-	-	+2.18***	0.0000	8.92	0.49	-	-	-	-	+0.97**	0.0050	2.66	0.345
Intercept	-1.76				-3.36				-0.07				-0.442			
Nagelkerke r²	0.12				0.41				0.087				0.18			

* denotes significance at the 0.05 type- I error rate (p < .05)

** denotes significance at the 0.01 type- I error rate (p < .01)

***denotes significance at the .001 type- I error rate (p < .001)

The second variable of disparities in ascribed status to hold any statistical significance was racial disparity ($B = +0.80$; $p < 0.042$; $\exp(B) = 2.24$). Racial disparity had a positive relationship with affective mechanisms of IPV. LMSM with racial disparity were two times more likely than non-disparate LMSM to report the occurrence of affective mechanisms of IPV. Nevertheless, racial disparity ($B = +0.28$; $p > 0.395$; $\exp(B) = 1.32$) was not associated with financial mechanisms of IPV.

Table 3 indicates that only disparity in ascribed status was positively associated with mechanisms of IPV. In other words, the likelihood of the ever occurrence of either financial or affective mechanisms of IPV can be attributed to only the disparities ascribed status variables and not the disparities in achieved status variables. Furthermore, it is important to note that not all ascribed status variables (citizenship disparity, race disparity, degree of masculinity, degree of attractiveness, and age disparity) had an effect on the occurrence of mechanisms of IPV.

Ever Occurrence of Intimate Partner Violence

The dependent variable for this thesis is intimate partner violence (IPV). However, intimate partner violence is broken down into two distinct categories: 1) Severe physical assault (which is characterized by more violent physical harm to partner such as punching or beating) and 2) Severe psychological aggression (which is characterized by aggressive threats, and destruction of property). The relationships between the independent variables (disparities in ascribed status, disparities in achieved status) and the four independent variables are examined. A second binary logistic regression is run to decipher the relationship between the mentioned independent and dependent variable with two additional mediating variables, financial and affective mechanisms of IPV.

Table 4 describes the relationship between the independent variable sets and the dependent variables (severe physical assault and severe psychological aggression). Model 1 (M1) includes the variable sets for disparities in ascribed and disparities in achieved status, and model 2 (M2) has the same variable sets in addition to the mediating variable sets (financial and affective mechanisms of IPV).

The disparities in ascribed status variable of citizenship disparity had a positive relationship ($B = +0.803$; $p < 0.042$; $\exp(B) = 2.23$) with severe physical assault. LMSM who had citizenship disparity also were 2 times more likely to report severe physical assault such as kicking, punching, and beating up their partners. As such, citizenship disparity is an important variable as it was also positively associated with mechanisms of IPV. Another statistically significant disparities in ascribed status variable was age disparity ($B = +0.05$; $p < 0.037$; $\exp(B) = 1.05$).

Nevertheless, neither citizenship disparity nor age disparity were significant indicators for severe physical assault once financial ($B = +1.36$; $p < 0.001$; $\exp(B) = 3.91$) and affective ($B = +2.18$; $p < 0.001$; $\exp(B) = 8.92$) mechanisms of IPV were analyzed in model 2. The increased likelihood of severe physical assault as a result of mechanisms of IPV diminish the effects of citizenship disparity on the dependent variable.

Furthermore, citizenship disparity ($B = +0.00$; $p > 0.999$; $\exp(B) = 1.00$) or any of the disparities in ascribed and disparities in achieved status variables were not associated with severe physical aggression. Although financial and affective mechanisms of IPV were strong indicators of severe physical aggression, only affective mechanisms of IPV ($B = +0.97$; $p < 0.005$; $\exp(B) = 2.66$) was considered statistically significant in relation to severe psychological aggression. LMSM who reported affective mechanisms of IPV were two times more likely to report severe psychological aggression such as threats of violence and breaking personal belongings.

After examining Tables 3 and 4, it is evident that disparities in ascribed status is related to the occurrence of mechanisms of IPV and severe physical assault. Upon accounting for mediating variables, it is then mechanisms of IPV that are most strongly associated with both severe physical assault and severe psychological aggression.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Out of all the variables that were analyzed, only three appeared to have statistical significance (i.e., citizenship status, age, and racial disparity). Citizenship and age disparity were only statistically significant in severe physical assault when there was no mediation between mechanisms of IPV and had no effect on neither affective mechanism of IPV and severe psychological aggressions. However, citizenship disparity had a positive relationship with the occurrence of financial mechanisms of IPV.

It is also important to note that racial disparity was a predictor of severe psychological aggression when mediated by affective mechanisms of IPV. As such, these variables are of particular interest as they outline the conditions of which severe intimate partner violence occurs. It is equally important to explain why other variables such as educational attainment, employment status, and degree of masculinity were not significant in this study's findings.

Citizenship disparity in LMSM directly and indirectly impact IPV. Citizen disparity has a positive association with financial mechanisms of IPV. In other words, citizenship status disparity increases the likelihood of the occurrence of financial mechanism, and financial mechanisms increase the odds of severe physical assault. Furthermore, citizenship disparity was not associated with severe psychological aggression even when it was mediated through financial mechanisms of IPV. It is important to explore why citizenship status out of all the other variables is the most indicative of severe IPV as traditional indicators of IPV such as educational attainment, employment disparity, and degree of attractiveness were not statistically significant.

This could be attributed to the prestige that U.S. citizenship carries. That is to say, that educational attainment, employment status, race, and even attractiveness are trivial in comparison

to U.S. citizenship. In other words, even when an American citizen is not considered successful through an American perspective, his status as an American may deem him as successful and desirable to non-citizens. Put another way, American citizenship may be a status symbol, if nothing more, and wealth, educational attainment, finance, and other things may just be relative and seen through their cultural perspective. This is important as it may make the non-citizen more willing to endure violence from his partner.

The high association between citizenship status financial mechanisms of IPV may also be attributed to status and power. The United States is a superpower and it is often associated with wealth, success, and prosperity. As such, U.S. citizens enjoy a high amount of prestige and status for members of surrounding countries especially those in Latin American countries. Citizenship disparity in LMSM also creates a disparity in the power dynamics of the relationship. In other words, the partner who is a U.S. citizen carries a greater amount of prestige and opportunity than the partner who is not a U.S. citizen.

A non-U.S. citizen, whether a resident or an undocumented immigrant, has less access to resources such as job opportunity, small social capital, and other factors associated with status. This puts the non-U.S. in a vulnerable position in which his status or lack thereof can be exploited and used against him. Other studies (Fuschel et al. 2012) have cited the fear of deportation as a threat that is often leveraged against undocumented immigrants. In other words, the partner who is a citizen may leverage the undocumented partner's status against him to get his ways. By doing so, he is utilizing a financial mechanism of IPV.

In turn, financial mechanisms of IPV are associated with severe physical assault. The relationship between citizenship status and severe physical assault diminishes once financial mechanisms of IPV are factored in. In other words, the potential gain or loss of status is not an

emotional one; therefore, abusive LMSM may not be able to citizenship disparity as a threat to emotional well-being.

Although citizenship disparity was associated with financial mechanisms of IPV, it was not related to affective mechanisms of IPV. This could be due to the mechanical nature of financial mechanisms versus the emotional nature of affective mechanisms. For instance, citizenship disparity or lack thereof can be leveraged against a non-citizen to ensure that he remains compliant to the abuser's demands. Nevertheless, affective mechanisms may not have the same form of control.

Prestige and status can be attractive to the non-U.S. partner in which it could potentially earn him some prestige, status, or opportunity by association. For example, a non-U.S. partner may be hoping to marry a U.S. citizen and gain access to a green card, or may enjoy the prestige of being considered an American by his friends and family back home. It is important to note that it is unlikely that non-U.S. citizens would marry solely for a green card; however, it could be a driving force that may encourage them to endure severe physical abuse and other forms of IPV. To put it briefly, citizenship disparity may set the conditions for the non-citizen partner to endure abuse either out of motivation to gain status or fear of losing status.

The positive correlation with age disparity and severe physical assault is consistent with other studies. However, it is important to note that studies have yielded contradicting results on the role of age and age disparity in IPV. For example, [Volpe \(2013\)](#) suggests that age disparities produce low relationship power in adolescent girls, which translates to a heightened risk of IPV. Although this study was done on adolescent girls with male older partners, the unequal power dynamics that result because of age disparity are applicable to LMSM. Older age may be

accompanied with a higher status, access to resource, and social capital. Older partners in LMSM may try to establish or maintain dominance by using severe physical violence.

Conversely, a study by Stephenson et al. (2011) noted that there were no significant association between age and age disparity and IPV. Perhaps the contradicting findings can help explain why age disparity, in this study, was associated with severe physical violence and not severe psychological aggression. Perhaps, too, the difference in outcomes may be attributed to the type of conflict that may arise due to age disparity.

Youth is a coveted status in the LGBTQ community. In a way, it is a status symbol that typically implies increased romantic and sexual prospects. As such, older LMSM may become jealous of their partner's potential infidelity. According to Rodriguez et al. (2015), jealousy fuels behaviors that are aimed to protect the relationship from alternative partners. Perhaps, the severe physical assault is something that happens spontaneously. In other words, psychological aggression can be planned and calculating, but severe physical assault could be a result of mismanaged anger and poor conflict resolution tactics. More research on needs to be done on this population to examine why age disparity is associated with physical assault but not psychological aggression.

Racial disparity is an important variable in this study as it is associated with severe physical assault and severe psychological aggression when mediated by an affective mechanism of IPV. It is worth mentioning that the positive relationship between racial disparity and severe physical assault was high when mediated by affective mechanisms of IPV. These findings are consistent with other studies on interracial relationships, which state that interracial relationships report higher prevalence of IPV (Martin et al. 2013) The study by Martin et al. (2013) also explains that differences in violence can be explained by socio-cultural issues. However, it is possible that

differences in values, in particular, the general acceptance of *machista*, patriarchal values and gender roles, as outlined in Latino culture, can cause conflict and manifest as attacks on racial identity. The *machista* view of IPV would indicate that there needs to be a woman involved for it to be considered IPV. In other words, *machista* values would not consider physical or psychological abuse in same sex couples as IPV. The assumption is that they are both evenly matched in strength and status, which, of course, is untrue.

A mismatch in race within the relationship is a disparity in ascribed status that may induce power differentials that are structurally induced (Dworkin et al. 2017; Carbone-Lopez 2012). Furthermore, the systematic power differentials between interracial LMSM relationships may threaten the values held by Latino men thus resulting in severe physical assault or severe psychological aggression. Men may use violence when they feel emasculated or fear their partner perceives them as weak (Oringher & Samuelson 2011).

IPV in interracial LMSM can manifest in three ways 1) the Latino partner's identity or ego may be threatened by the pronounced power differentials brought about due to his ethnoracial identity, 2) the non-Latino partner may use his higher status or privilege to victimize his partner, or lastly and probably most likely 3) it is a combination of both.

Interestingly enough, racial disparity was not associated with the occurrence of financial mechanisms of IPV. That is to say, that race disparity had no effect on whether LMSM used a partner's minority status to prevent them from obtaining or maintaining financial resources. This is curious of course, since it contradicts several studies of which have found a strong association between race and IPV. For example, Dworkin (2017) and Carbone-Lopez (2012) found that interracial couples experienced systematically induced power differentials. In other words, years of systematic oppression creates differences in opportunity, power, and overall privilege. Not only

is IPV more frequent in interracial relationships, it is also more severe, according to Chatier and Caetano (2012) and another study by Brownridge (2016). This may have to do with composition of the population. The study does not distinguish between races; it only identifies whether or not LMSM are of the same race.

There variables listed above were considered significantly related to IPV, and for the most part, consistent with other studies of IPV. However, it is of equal importance to mention a few of the variables that bore no significant association with severe physical assault or psychological aggression. Surprisingly, educational attainment, employment disparity, and degree of masculinity were not associated with IPV. Several studies (Brownridge 2016; Curandi et al. 2012; Stephenson et al. 2011) have found educational attainment to be an indicator of IPV. The negative correlation indicates that higher educational levels, for example, yield lower occurrence or risk of IPV (Curandi et al. 2002). Goldenberg et al. (2016) also explained how educational disparity in same sex couples was associated with higher threats of violence.

Furthermore, employment disparity has also been widely cited as an indicator of IPV. Studies suggest that Hispanic homes with low household incomes have the highest prevalence of IPV (Caetano et al. 2000). Other studies have tied low income to male unemployment, which is a predictor of IPV (Caetano et al. 2000; Caetano, Nelson, & Curandi, 2010). As such, financial dependence increases the likelihood of IPV, as the dependent person may not have the resources to leave the relationship (Moreno 2007).

Lastly, the link between masculinity and IPV has been well established by several studies (Brown 2008; Stephenson et al. 2016). This in part due to hyper masculinity and competing to be the alpha. This is supported by another study link between high levels of masculinity and IPV in bisexual and gay men (Oringher & Samuelson 2011). In spite of the several studies supporting

the relationship between the independent variables (educational attainment, employment disparity, and degree of masculinity) and intimate partner violence, the results of this thesis study do not support the existing literature.

Thus, it is then important to reflect as to why the mentioned variables were not significant in this study. The descriptive statistics as shown on Table 2 indicate that there was not much disparity in educational attainment to begin with. The respondents had an average of 2.55 year disparity in educational attainment. With very few exceptions, respondents did not have much disparity in educational attainment to begin with. Thus, the few that did have a significant gap in educational attainment (as calculated in years) may not reported instances of mechanisms of IPV or IPV.

The descriptive statistics for employment disparity on Table 2 reveal that the typical respondent had an average disparity of 12 hours. In other words the respondent or the partner worked an average of 12 hours more or less than their partner. Nevertheless, this variable has a high standard deviation (14.85) which means that indicates that the values may have been inflated by outliers with extreme disparities in hours worked per week. As such, it is likely that there was a smaller gap in disparity of hours worked per week and it may not have been substantial enough to have an impact on the power dynamics of the couple.

Masculinity was similar to the previous variables as it has too low of a mean to have an impact on power dynamics. This outcome may be due to culture appreciation for masculinity in both LGBTQ and Latino culture. Perhaps, respondents were more likely to identify as masculine due to implicit bias rather than actual reality.

As such, the samples homophily may be a plausible explanation for the inconsistency between the results and other literature. Studies on Hispanic or Latino IPV are typically done in a

heterosexual context. While these studies give a good insight of the ethnoracial dimension of IPV, they do not explore the LGBTQ dimension. The studies that are done on LGBTQ IPV are typically done in a Caucasian context, which in turn obscures aspects that are unique to Latino IPV (Balsam et al. 2011). As such, it is possible that this thesis study yielded results that contradict traditional studies of IPV because it not a traditional study of IPV. In other words, the results may be different because the population is different.

CHAPTER VI

LIMITATIONS

As a scientific endeavor, this thesis has limitations that will hopefully prompt future researchers as they plan and execute their own studies in this topical area. The first major limitation was the utilization of convenient sampling. Although, it was helpful in finding subtle, discreet, and stigmatized groups such as the one for this study, it runs the risk of skewing the results and not really knowing the nature of the sample and how accurately it mirrors and represents the target population. In this case, many of the respondents were related to “node-1 alters” (i.e., Facebook friends of the researcher). As such, there was an overrepresentation of people born from the mid-1980s- mid-1990s (which is the age bracket in which “node-1 alters” falls under).

It is also important to note that the majority of respondents and their partners (76.1%) were of the same race as opposed to mixed race relationships (23.0%). As a result, race disparity may have been underrepresented in this study. Because “node-1 alters” are located in a predominately Hispanic area, it is likely that those sharing and responding to the survey were also Hispanic; thus, it might have increased the occurrence of having a respondent in a racially homogenous relationship. The same was true for other variables such as educational disparity. Further research will be needed to account for the increased homogeneity in the sample. The survey asks for respondents to report instances of IPV involving them and their current or most recent partner. However, respondents also serve as representatives for their partners. Therefore, the actions and attitudes of the represented partner were according to how the respondent interpreted them.

Another limitation is the dearth in research available to adequately build a LMSM model of IPV without basing it off from heterosexual populations and models of IPV. As such much of

the assumptions and casting of the theoretical framework might have manifested the point of view and sensibilities of heterosexual relationship. With the change cultural terrane in regards to heterosexual and homosexual relationships, this study contributes to developing a stronger launching point and foundation for LGBTQ informed social research.

Lastly, internet surveys are convenient, economical, and anonymous; nevertheless, such surveys may have an upward bias in socioeconomic status as racial/ethnic minorities may have less access to the internet or web devices (Sue & Ritter, 2012). However, despite this limitation, this thesis was able to contribute to the case studies and experiences in regards Internet survey and the application of snowball sampling in social media sites such as Facebook.

CHAPTER VII

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study are important to consider when developing programs that are aimed to help LMSM IPV survivors. Rizo and Macy (2011) found that many agencies were not adequately equipped to offer services to Spanish-speakers. Furthermore, the presence of an interpreter would make it difficult to build the rapport needed to help LMSM IPV survivors. Citizenship disparity is strongly associated with severe physical assault such as punching, kicking, and beating a partner. As such, it is important to eliminate the language barrier by having English-Spanish bilingual on staff. These said, the results of this thesis contributes to the collection of cases and studies that might help jumpstart efforts to improve LMSM IPV survivor services and initiatives.

Fear of deportation is an effective way to threaten an undocumented LMSM IPV survivor's livelihood (using financial mechanisms of IPV). Many undocumented immigrants are afraid of deportation and do not reach out to agencies or the police to report such acts. As such, agencies should focus on using rights-based education to empower survivors (Messing et al. 2015). Traditionally, IPV shelters rely on institutions such as churches to provide help and resources. However, due to the many negative religious views on same sex partners, it may act as a barrier to help seeking behavior. Moreover, a more useful tactic is to encourage building a relationship between LMSM community and the police (Messing et al. 2015).

Agencies and mental health providers aiming to help prevent LMSM may want to consider age disparities and other disparities in ascribed status within LMSM. A gap in age may dictate the power dynamics of the relationship in subtle ways such as household division of labor, finances

and rent, and household decision-making. Furthermore, mental health professionals should help LMSM create an “egalitarian relationship”.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Intimate partner violence is a major public health issue that affects people regardless of race/ ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. As such, Latino men who have sex with men are vulnerable segment of the population due to the limited public resources aimed to aid victims of IPV. Furthermore, decades of heterosexism have obscured and marginalized the experiences of both sexual, and racial/ethnic minorities. The objective of this thesis was to explore how disparities in achieved and in ascribed status create power differentials that can be used to leverage and ultimately affect the form and the severity of intimate partner violence.

This thesis employed a 47-item questionnaire, which generated data that were used to explore the relationship between the two independent constructs of disparities in achieved status and in ascribed status, the mediating construct, mechanisms of IPV, and the dependent construct, form and severity of IPV, by using a binary logistic regression approach. The relationship between the independent and dependent construct was also assessed without the presence of the mediating construct. Some of the findings of this study were consistent with those of other studies; however, some variables that were traditionally associated with IPV were not found to be statistically significant in this study.

Although the theoretical model predicted that both disparities in achieved and in ascribed status would influence the form and the severity of IPV with or without mediation, it was observed that that for LMSMs, disparities in ascribed status were statistically significant. Since intersections of minority statuses are seldom assessed in studies IPV it is difficult, without any future studies, to assess whether these findings are indicative of the realities of LMSM. Because intersectional

studies are relatively new, it is important to continue conducting studies on overlapping minority statuses and IPV so that we may generate data that are generalizable to the population.

Furthermore, studies such as these will help policymakers and intervention program managers to: 1) acquire a better understanding of IPV in a more circumspect and comprehensive manner, and 2) create policies that extend resources and protection to LMSM IPV victims. Providing culturally sensitive and inclusive programs that fill the unique needs of LMSM IPV survivors will protect and empower a very vulnerable segment of the population; this is one intent that this thesis hopes to help realize and put forward.

In terms of contribution to the sociological literature, this thesis has both theoretical and methodological contributions. In terms of theory and concept development, this thesis did the following:

- 1) Contributed to enriching the definition of disparities in ascribed and in achieved status by casting these disparities along various axes such as nationality, attractiveness, degree of masculinity;
- 2) Contributed to the investigation of mechanisms or leverages used to effect power and influence in same-sex relationships and/or partnerships;
- 3) Contributed to creative ways of imagining theoretical and conceptual relationships (e.g., mediation) among social status, mechanisms and linkages, and types and forms of intimate partner violence; and
- 4) Generated a new hypothesis to pursue in terms of how the interaction of severity and form of IPV might better advance theoretical understanding about the dynamic and typology of IPV in general.

In terms of methodological contribution, this thesis did the following in terms of measurement, sampling, and data collection techniques:

- 1) Contributed creative ways of measuring disparities for both categorical (e.g., nationality) and numerical (e.g. age) measures of disparities in status.
- 2) Contributed creative ways of devising recruitment techniques for participants in social media sites such as the use of the facilities of Facebook to post both text messages and video materials within the bounds of IRB-approved protocol. It also contributes to the cases and experiences in conducting data collection and sampling with the framework of social media sites of hidden populations
- 3) Redefined ways and introduced new ways of conceptualizing and conducting snowball sampling and network-based sampling using the sharing facility and friend-of-friends connectivity on Facebook so that the distinction between node-1 alters and higher-order alters is possible to speak of and to consider in the planning of sampling and research designing.
- 4) Expands social research experience in the conduct of ethical research with high levels of external validity and internal validity, all within the context of social media use of stigmatized populations such as same-sex couples

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VITA

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