

OLLAS Report #18

ISSN 2768-1963

© Shutterstock



“The Greatest Path to Acceptance is to Know We Exist:”

Capturing Narratives of Sexually Diverse Latinx in Nebraska



May 2022

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Omaha



OLLAS

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF LATINO/LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

The Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS, pronounced “oy-yas”) as established in the fall of 2003 and is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO). OLLAS’ mission is to combine academic excellence with real-world engagement to enhance our understanding of Latino/ Latin American peoples and critical issues. OLLAS’ goals include developing policy-oriented and community-relevant research, creating learning opportunities for students and communities beyond the classroom and across borders, and establishing strategic and egalitarian community partnerships to strengthen our capacity to address local and global concerns. For more information, visit our website: www.unomaha.edu/ollas.

About the OLLAS Report

The OLLAS Report Series publishes the results of research and community engaged research projects carried out by UNO’s Office of Latino/Latin American Studies faculty and staff. These research reports are data and information driven interdisciplinary approaches to the experiences and needs of the Latino community in Omaha and Nebraska. Our research helps inform policies and programs about the economic, social, cultural, and political impacts of immigration and the growing influence of the Latino population in Nebraska and its surroundings. The OLLAS Report Series is intended to generate policy discussions and actions that advance the incorporation of Latinos in Nebraska and the nation at large.

ISSN: 2768-1963

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.



“The Greatest Path to Acceptance
is to Know We Exist:”
Capturing Narratives of Sexually
Diverse Latinx in Nebraska

Dumayi Gutierrez

University of Nebraska at Omaha

Alliant International University

Daniel Nguyen

University of Nebraska at Lincoln

Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS)

University of Nebraska at Omaha

OLLAS Report #18

May 2022

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Omaha



ABSTRACT

Sexually diverse individuals and communities face adverse experiences from discrimination, rejection, and negative mental health outcomes, yet experience high levels of pride, strength, and connection. For Latinx who identify as sexually diverse (i.e., Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Asexual, Plus (LGBQA+)), these experiences are centered at the intersection of these two identities. Limited research has focused on their experiences and in particular, their experiences of living in Nebraska: a majority White and heterosexual state. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore their intersectional narratives and places of advocacy using an Intersectional Minority Stress lens. This report begins with an introduction to intersectionality and minority stress model. This study then presents 10 in-depth interviews with sexually diverse Latinx between the ages of 19-56 who currently or previously lived in Nebraska. Through narrative thematic analysis, four themes are highlighted: (a) intersectional identity navigation within systems, (b) intersectional minority stressors and ameliorative factors, (c) connection and disconnection within community and chosen families, and (d) invisibility to visibility. Lastly, implications and future directions are discussed to enhance understanding, awareness, and support for sexually diverse Latinx in Nebraska.

KEYWORDS: Latinx, LGBTQ+, intersectionality, minority stress, community, sexually diverse Latinx, advocacy

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank the participants of this study for their narratives of vulnerability, courage, and strength to promote insight to the community. We would also like to thank Dr. Cristian Doña-Reveco, Director of UNO's Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS), and Yuriko Doku, OLLAS Assistant Director for working with us through marketing and funding.

CONTACT

Dumayi Gutierrez, dumayigutierrez@unomaha.edu, Office of Latino/Latin American Studies, University of Nebraska at Omaha, 6001 Dodge St., Omaha, NE 68182, USA and Couple and Family Therapy Program, Alliant International University San Diego/Online, 9 San Diego, CA, USA.

FUNDING SOURCE

Data analyzed for this project were originally collected through funding from the Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The opinions and conclusions of this project are the sole responsibility of the authors.

CITATION

Gutierrez, D. & Nguyen, D. (2022). "The Greatest Path to Acceptance is to Know We Exist:" Capturing Narratives of Sexually Diverse Latinx in Nebraska. OLLAS Report #18. Omaha: University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.1018>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOSSARY	1
INTRODUCTION	2
BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE	3
Sexually Diverse Latinx and Midwest Culture	3
Community and Safe Spaces	3
METHOD	8
Participants	8
Interview	9
Demographic Questionnaire	9
Interview Data Analysis Approach	10
Trustworthiness and Self Reflexivity of Researchers	11
MULTIDIMENSIONAL STORIES	12
Intersectional Identity Navigation within Systems	13
a. Societal system: Nebraska demographic narratives	13
b. Intrapersonal system: Experiences of identity prominence	14
c. Community system: Latinx cultural narratives	16
d. Growth through learning	17
Intersectional Minority stressors	18
a. Distal stress: Local discrimination	18
b. Proximal stress: Hiding within family	19
c. Ameliorative factors: Pride and giving back	20
Connection and Disconnection through Community and Spaces	21
a. Meaning of community	21
b. Lack of intersectional spaces	22
c. Chosen spaces and families	23
From Invisibility to Visibility through Actions for Advocacy	24
CONCLUSION	26
REFERENCES	30
PREVIOUS OLLAS REPORTS	35

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1:	Intersectional Minority Stress Theory through a Sexological Lens	7
Figure 2:	Themes of Sexually Diverse Latinx Experiences (Research Question 1): “What are the experiences of sexually diverse Latinx individuals in Nebraska?”	12
Figure 3:	Themes of Sexually Diverse Latinx Experiences (Research Question 2): “What are safe space experiences of sexually marginalized Latinx individuals in Nebraska.”	13
Figure 4:	Themes of Sexually Diverse Latinx Experiences (Research Question 3): “In what ways can the Nebraska Latinx community increase support and allyship to sexually marginalized Latinx community?”	13
Table 1:	Participant demographics and characteristics (n = 10)	10

GLOSSARY

Gutierrez (2019) provides an overview of key terms used in this study:

Intersectionality: term coined by Kimberly Crenshaw to incorporate multiple marginalized identities in theory (Crenshaw, 1997).

Latinx: non-binary and gender non-conforming inclusive ethnic identity terminology coined from 'Latino,' used to describe individuals with Latin American and other Spanish-speaking country ancestry (Alcoff, 2005).

Minority Stress: includes factors of distal stress (discrimination, prejudice), proximal stress (expectations of rejection, concealment and internalized heterosexism) and psychological distress from experiences of sexually marginalized status (i.e. sexual orientation) (Meyer, 2003).

Sexually Diverse: any individual who does not identify as heterosexual, does not necessarily prescribe to lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer or asexual (Mohr & Kendra, 2011, p. 12).

Other useful terms:

Heartland: the central geographic region of the United States in which mainstream values or traditional values predominate from 'classic' Midwest (Muro et al., 2018).

Midwest: the north central part of the US which includes Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, Missouri, and Kansas (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022).

INTRODUCTION

Latinx in the United States represent around 18.7% of the population, equating to more than 62.1 million (U.S. Census, 2020). While most Latinx peoples and Latin American immigrants live in the East and West coasts and in the Southwestern USA, historically a large number have resided in the Midwest (Vega, 2021). Although Latinx communities in the Midwest have been around for centuries, the community grew exponentially around the 1980's (Millard et al., 2004). Latinx communities have increased in numbers over the last decade within the Midwest, comprising 7.6% of the region's population, equating to over 5.1 million Latinx (Martinez & Corando, 2018), and 11.4% within Nebraska (U.S. Census, 2021). Latinx influxes have transformed Midwest communities, demographics, and structures (Martinez et al., 2011), yet experiences and needs are a consistently lost narrative within the community.

Integrated in this experience is the Coronavirus (COVID-19), which has plagued and gravely impacted the United States, particularly the Latinx community. According to Rodriguez-Diaz et al. (2020), the community has accounted for 33% of confirmed COVID-19 cases with greater death tolls in the Midwestern Latinx counties. However, for ethnically and sexually diverse communities, statistics show disproportionate impact of COVID-19 including access to health care, economic turmoil, and elevated health risk (Movement Advancement Project, 2021). As prevalent as these numbers are, scarce research has been conducted to obtain experiences of sexually marginalized Latinx. Specifically, in Nebraska where 19% of the sexually and gender diverse population identify as Latinx (UCLA School of Law Williams Institute, 2019).

In this report we provide several solutions to; (a) help fill the gap of intersectional cultural competency work; (b) develop a better understanding of an underrepresented groups' experiences; and (c) contribute to research/community allyship on the intersections of racial/ethnic identity and sexual identity in Nebraska. It is our hope this reports contributes to increased awareness and advocacy conversations of sexually diverse Latinx communities in the Heartland.

In the first section of this report we present the background and significance of the research project, grounding it on current research on this topic. In the following section we present the method used in this research. In the third section, we present our analysis of the interviews focusing on three main themes; the participants navigation of their intersectional identity, the stressors they confront as intersectional minorities, their connection and disconnection within the larger community, and their actions towards advocacy. We conclude this report with specific action steps for areas of change and support for sexually diverse Latinx community in Nebraska.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Latinx Midwest Culture

Latinx in the Midwest face a myriad of struggles including language barriers to local resources and lack of cultural sensitivity within them, (Institute for Latino Studies University of Notre Dame, 2002; Morales et al., 2012), distress with anti-Latinx and criminalization rhetoric (Cervantes et al., 2018), high-risk working conditions (Ramos et al., 2020), and racism and ethnic discrimination (Millard et al., 2021; Raffaelli & Wiley, 2013). In recent scholarship studying COVID-19, lack of resources, testing, accessibility, and barriers have contributed to increased distress within the Latinx community (Rodriguez, 2020). However, research has also shown strengths within the community such as opportunistic perspective: reframing of hardship to steps of goal achievement (Raffaelli & Wiley, 2013); strong personal community connection; and cultural pride (Acevedo & Stodolska, 2017; Crane & Millard, 2021). Vega (2003), associates intrapersonal resiliency as “ethnic belonging” within Heartland Latinx narratives: working to create space for their culture through the “right to be different and to belong” (Vega, p.196).

As studies are limited for Latinx experiences in Nebraska, one study by Ramos et al., (2017), emphasizes the sense of community, emotional connection, and fulfillment of needs in regards to life satisfaction among Hispanics in Nebraska. (*Hispanic* is defined as a racial term to describe genetics, Latinx is an ethnicity. While these are separate terminologies, experiences may be parallel to one another [Lopez et al., 2021]). Through a sequential explanatory mixed methods design (N = 233 participants), a sense of community and belonging, unity, and acceptance significantly correlated to positive life satisfaction (Ramos et al., 2017). However, a majority of research stays centered within an immigration and acculturative narrative in regards to the Midwest. It is true that a large portion of Latinx community has been drawn to the Midwest because of migration and agriculture (Raffaelli & Wiley, 2013; McConnell, 2021), yet research often pigeonholes Latinx experiences into migrative experiences, erasing intersections of diverse Latinx narratives. As awareness and understanding of Latinx community is limited, sexually diverse experiences within Latinx Midwest culture and family, especially within Nebraska, are all but excluded in literature.

Sexually Diverse Latinx and Midwest Culture

Scarce research has explored experiences of sexually diverse Latinx in the Midwest, as the Heartland is largely homogenous in race and ethnicity with the state being 88.1% White (U.S. Census, 2021) and heterocentric, with 96.2% of adults reporting themselves as heterosexual (UCLA School of Law Williams Institute, 2019). However, few studies have focused on and

described sexually diverse Latinx with multiple, intersectional challenges in a predominantly majority state. Thus far, research has highlighted a Heartland rhetoric of conservatism and rejection of the sexually diverse community (Fredman et al., 2015), and a throng of Midwest LGBTQ stories begin with, “growing up in an extremely conservative town in the Midwest” (Goldberg et al., 2012, p. 9). Yet in regards to Nebraska, Kazyak and Stange (2018), found that over 70% of Nebraskans favored laws protecting sexually diverse individuals from job and housing discrimination, and 60% support legal relationship recognition for gays and lesbians. This portrays that Nebraska, overall, may have a different rhetoric in the Heartland.

However, Latinx culture encompasses a variety of constructs such as religiosity, acculturation, and gender norms that creates conflict for acceptance and support for sexually diverse Latinx (Ryan et al., 2010). The community faces challenges including dual racism and sexism (Frost et al., 2015), lack of community both through culture and sexuality (Gutierrez, 2019), and experiences of harassment and prejudice within their families (Asencio, 2009). Extensive data has shown highly religious and traditional Latinos tend to reject the LGBTQ community as a whole (Campesinio, 2006; Dutwin, 2012; García, Gray-Stanley & Ramirez-Valles, 2008; Severson et al., 2014). Diaz, Huebner, Russell, Ryan, and Sanchez (2010) found that 4 out of 10 White and Latino young adults between 21 to 25 years old, report being rejected by highly religious family members due to their sexual orientation. Another study by Martinez et al., 2011, found that bisexual Latinx men in the Midwest felt they would be rejected by Latinos if they disclosed their identity and did not find social support in the community. Thus, prescribed cultural and social norms in the Latinx community may promote distress from rejection. In contrast to Vegas (2015) description of ethnic belonging, sexually diverse Latinx may feel they may not belong to any group, sexual or ethnic. Lastly, mirroring Latinx in the Midwest being pigeonholed for migration, specific sexually diverse Latinx literature discusses nightlife, HIV/AIDS, and sexual activities (Bowleg, 2000; Rodriguez, 2020). These experiences must be understood, yet if literature focuses on one-dimensional narratives, we risk repeating the marginalized and stereotypical cycles rather than giving space to their complete experiences.

Community and Safe Spaces

Latinx communities rely on supportive relationships and families for emotional support, intergenerational care, development and maintenance of cultural identities, hold strong identification and attachment to family known as *familismo*, and shared opportunities (Acosta, 2011; Espinoza, 2010; Villatoro et al., 2014). Sexually diverse Latinx may take these values from their culture into their chosen families and safe spaces. Chosen families represent relationships outside of the nuclear family who fill family roles and provide emotional and mental support (Blair

& Pukall, 2015). Members may include friends, extended family members, mentors and community resources, and which have contributed to resiliency within the community (Dewaele, 2011).

Safe spaces are dimensional, they are spatial and social areas of social justice, unique and organic, outside of heteronormative dominate discourses, and environments of self-awareness and respect (Fetner, 2012). For sexually diverse Latinx, safe spaces within the community provides a learning and inclusive environment (Fetner et al., 2012), social support (Martinez et al., 2011), and a place of resiliency (Molina et al., 2019). Further, spaces, either theoretical or physical, promote feelings of authenticity, identity embracement, and are a place to call “home” (Rodriguez, 2020, p.280). However, certain spaces are limited and may not feel safe to all sexually diverse Latinx. A study by Cisneros and Brancho (2019) of 31 Latinx undocuqueer (undocumented queer) immigrants found that LGBTQ night life and relationships were symbolic safe spaces yet they sometimes promoted fears of anxiety, as power was wielded against their immigration statuses within. Further, certain spaces may not feel safe within or from outsiders for sexually diverse Latinx. In 2016, the LGBTQ Latinx community came under direct attack with one of the largest massacres to occur on U.S. soil: Pulse Nightclub (Gibson & Minshew, 2016). Following media coverage, the extent of assault on the Latinx LGBTQ community was excluded, “demarking distinctions between identities ‘deserving’ and ‘underserving’ of being recognized” (Cisneros & Brancho, 2019, p. 1491). As community and safe spaces provide intersectional support for sexually diverse Latinx, it is imperative for us to understand what these spaces are, how they could better provide visibility to Latinx/diverse identities, and how we can, as a community overall, serve them.

Through oral history interviews, the purpose of our investigation was threefold; (a) to present and gain an understanding of sexually marginalized Latinx narratives, (b) to highlight safe spaces and areas of protection in Nebraska for this community; and (c) to explore sources of allyship for the Latinx community. We addressed the following Research Questions (RQ):

RQ1: What are the experiences of sexually diverse Latinx individuals in Nebraska?

RQ2: What are safe space experiences of sexually diverse Latinx individuals in Nebraska?

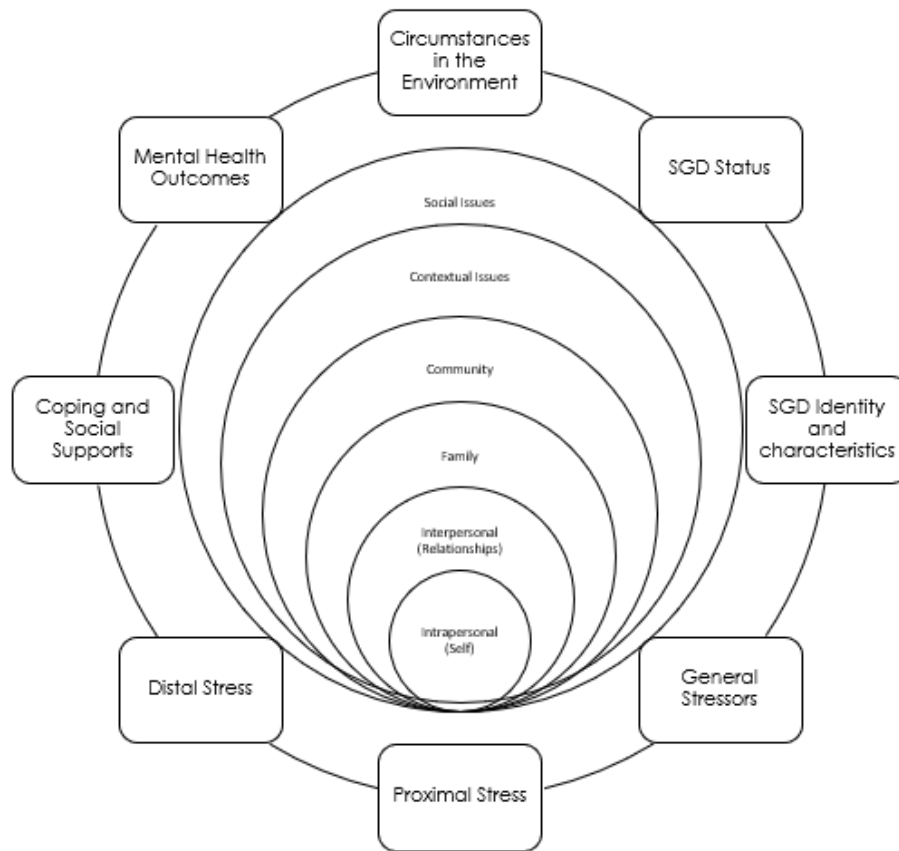
RQ3: In what ways can the Nebraska Latinx community increase support and allyship to sexually diverse Latinx community?

THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS: INTERSECTIONAL MINORITY STRESS

In this study, we employed an Intersectional Minority Stress framework to interpret data. Intersectionality (rooted in Black feminist movement, highlighting issues of oppression and privilege), examines the integration of marginalized identities such as race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender (Crenshaw, 1997). Minority Stress Theory aims to center sexually diverse individuals' realities within social environments (i.e., dominant messages of sexuality, gender, and societal expectations) (Meyer, 1995; Meyer, 2003). When a conflict or mismatch between an individual and society occurs, social stress increases. Conversely, belonging and connection arise from harmony (Gutierrez, 2019). Minority stressors include distal stress (objective stress through discrimination and prejudice), proximal stress (subjective stress including internalized heterosexism, expectations of rejection, and concealment), ameliorating factors (coping resources and social support), and mental health outcomes (Meyer, 2003).

Sexually and gender diverse communities face external and internal distress navigating identities that are outside of the dominant societal construct of heterosexuality (Meyer, 1995; Testa et al., 2015). However, sexually diverse Latinx communities face intersectional minority stressors including cultural expectations, traditions, gender roles, internalized heterosexism, and family conflict related to their sexual orientation and gender expression (Gutierrez, 2019). Stressors have contributed to increased adverse mental health outcomes for this community including depression (Gutierrez, 2019) and psychological distress (Velez, Moradi & DeBlaere, 2014). The following proposed model (Figure 1), is based on an intersystemic sexological approach incorporating domains of individual, relational, familial, contextual, and societal factors to promote awareness and inclusivity of a system at work (Hertlein et al., 2020). Thus, using an intersectional minority stress theory lens, can inform nuances and integration of sexually diverse Latinx identities rooted in Nebraska's social environment of integrated identities, chosen relationships, family values, Latinx culture, community, and society.

Figure 1.
Intersectional Minority Stress Theory through a Sexological Lens



Source: Crenshaw, 1993; Hertlein et al., 2020; Meyer, 1995

METHOD

For centuries, making sense of human experiences and social and relational interactions, and construction of meaning within dominant discourses have come from narratives (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To capture sexually diverse Latinx narratives, we utilized a thematic narrative analysis design to understand full and profound experiences with a smaller number of participants. This process allowed for participants to utilize their experiences as frames of reference and, we, as authors, to see realities through their eyes (Bryman, 2012). From the well-known models of narrative analysis, we employed thematic analysis. Thematic analysis gives space to developing themes from experiences that sufficiently describes the data, and gives detail to broader systemic and social attitudes (Bryman, 2012; Riessmann, 1993). We utilized thematic analysis rooted in narrative approach to give power and space to participants' narratives, going against Western, heterocentric norms that contribute to marginalization (Gutierrez et al., 2021). Thematic analysis, rooted in narratives, focuses on "how stories are experienced" rather than "why," going beyond cultivated social norms and stereotypes of identities (Woodley & Lockard, 2016). Particularly within an intersectional minority stress framework, it aims to highlight intersecting identities, richness of cultural experiences, and uniqueness of intrapersonal self in connection to social stressors (Bryman, 2012; Glesne, 2016). As this form of analysis has been more sensitive towards marginalized communities, interviews act as processes of interactional focus between participants and researchers (Moree, 2018). Mirroring limited opportunities of connection in Nebraska for sexually diverse Latinx, interviews created theoretical processes of nuanced language, intersectional narratives, and "safe spaces" to empower marginalized voices.

Participants

Convenience and snowball sampling methods were used to recruit participants for the study to include both students and members of the general community. These methods allowed for accessibility and proximity for diverse populations (Gutierrez, 2020, Ch.2). With the COVID-19 pandemic and limited means of face-to-face connection, these sampling methods were optimal to utilize in this study. All recruitment methods and data collection took place virtually. The criteria for participation included 1) identifying as Latino/a/x, 2) being age 19 or older, 3) having lived in Nebraska currently or in the past, 4) and identifying as non-heterosexual. We contacted various groups including university LGBTQ+ centers, Nebraska PFLAG chapters, multicultural Greek organizations, university departments (e.g., psychology, sociology, ethnic studies), and other LGBTQ+ organizations. Additionally, we contacted our local networks who aligned with the participation criteria. A research poster and additional study information was distributed to the aforementioned organizations and individuals.

Participants completed a brief screener demographic survey to ensure that individuals met the participation criteria, and to collect participant information in order to provide compensation. Afterwards, the participants completed an open-ended interview about their experiences as Latinx LGBTQ+ individuals with interviews that did not last more than 1.03 hours. The majority of the interviews were conducted by Dr. Dumayi Gutierrez and Daniel Nguyen. Two of the interviews were conducted by two student researchers at the start of this project in 2018. Participant demographics are summarized in Tables 1. Participants were compensated with a \$25 Amazon gift card.

Interviews

An oral history interview process with 22 open-ended questions was used for participants to provide authentic and open narratives, empower and adhere to their voices, and shift power for the interview to be collaborative. Within qualitative work, it is key to avoid expected answers and perspectives to allow for organic responses (Meriem & Tisdell, 2016). Some questions in the interview included:

- “What is your relationship with your family like if you have come out?”
- “Do you have a community of LBGTQIA+ Latinx people in Nebraska?”
- “Have you felt accepted by other people in the Latinx community in Nebraska? In other places?”
- “In what ways could the Latinx community in Nebraska empower and support the LBGTQIA+ Latinx community?”

Due to potential psychological distress with identity work, acceptance, and family navigation, we included medical service numbers, HIPPA complaint privacy, and emphasized voluntary participation in the consent form.

Demographic Questionnaire

We prepared and applied a basic demographic questionnaire to gather information about participants’ age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and native language to infer research questions. Table 1 below shows the demographic characteristics of the participants of this research project.

Table 1
Participant demographics and characteristics (n = 10)

Name (Pseudonym)	Nationality	Sexual Orientation	Age	Gender
Nora	Multiracial (White, Mexican)	Lesbian	19	Cisfemale
Aule	Mexican	Lesbian	37	Unknown
Kary	Mexican	Asexual	56	Transwoman
Ariel	Mexican	Lesbian	29	Cisfemale
Miguel	Argentinian	Gay	49	Cismale
Rubio	Puerto Rican	Gay	53	Cismale
Ana	Mexican	Pansexual	24	Cisfemale
Jaime	Mexican	Gay	36	Cismale
Nedy	Guatemalan	Queer	30	Cismale
Lolo	Panamanian	Gay	22	Cismale

Note: Abbreviations will be used throughout the manuscript for identity (i.e., Lesbian, Cisfemale = LCF, Asexual Transwoman = AW, Gay Cismale = GCM, Pansexual Cisfemale = PCF).

Source: Authors' Demographic Questionnaire

Interview Data Analysis Approach

The interview sample size was 10 and all interviews were transcribed verbatim via Otter.ai transcription services. Analysis was conducted following the Braun and Clarke (2006) guide to thematic analysis which involves thoroughly reading and re-reading transcripts, initial and inductive coding, and through a narrative lens, developing latent themes and subthemes. Based on the familiarity we possessed from conducting the interviews, we devised a list of codes based on recurring ideas mentioned by participants. These codes were given short descriptions and were then applied to the interview transcriptions. Upon reviewing the joint application of the codes, we devised overarching themes that captured the data utilizing a coding tree method, optimal for narratives to evolve within the patterns categorized (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Themes and subthemes were defined and discussed between us to ensure reliability. The report was then finalized in rich detail ensuring elaboration of voices, credibility and experiential narratives of our participants' experiences (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lingard, 2019).

Trustworthiness and Self Reflexivity of Researchers

Qualitative research is an “ongoing reflexive dialogue on the part of the researcher or researchers with regards to these issues, throughout the analytic process” (Braun & Clarke, 20, p. 82). With intersectional multicultural work in particular, it is imperative for researchers to be transparent and recognize the constructs we navigate daily.

As I (Dumayi), identify as a cisgender Latinx lesbian, this study sparked passion and interest due to the need for space and exposure of sexually diverse Latinx experiences in Nebraska. I hold a strong Dominican identity and as a first generation American, my experiences are layered in an intersectional framework. I am originally from an area known for its diversity and completed my higher education in the Midwest. During my time in the Midwest, I grew to understand my identities as marginalized, interwoven in my day-to-day, and in need of continued advocacy and support. In Nebraska, finding other sexually diverse Latinx was few and far between; it took time and initiative to make the connections I did. My graduate experience focused on minority stressors and sexually and gender diverse Latinx communities. Thus, I hold bias in my perspectives and experiences, personally and through my academic career. However, my identities are beneficial in that they provide in-depth insight into cultivation of safe spaces, as well as helping me navigate marketing, interviews, analysis, and true narrative collaboration with our participants’ experiences. In addition, I acknowledge my stance as privileged through education, cisgender expression, and the ability to take a position of alliance and empowerment in a Eurocentric, heterosexually dominant society with our participants.

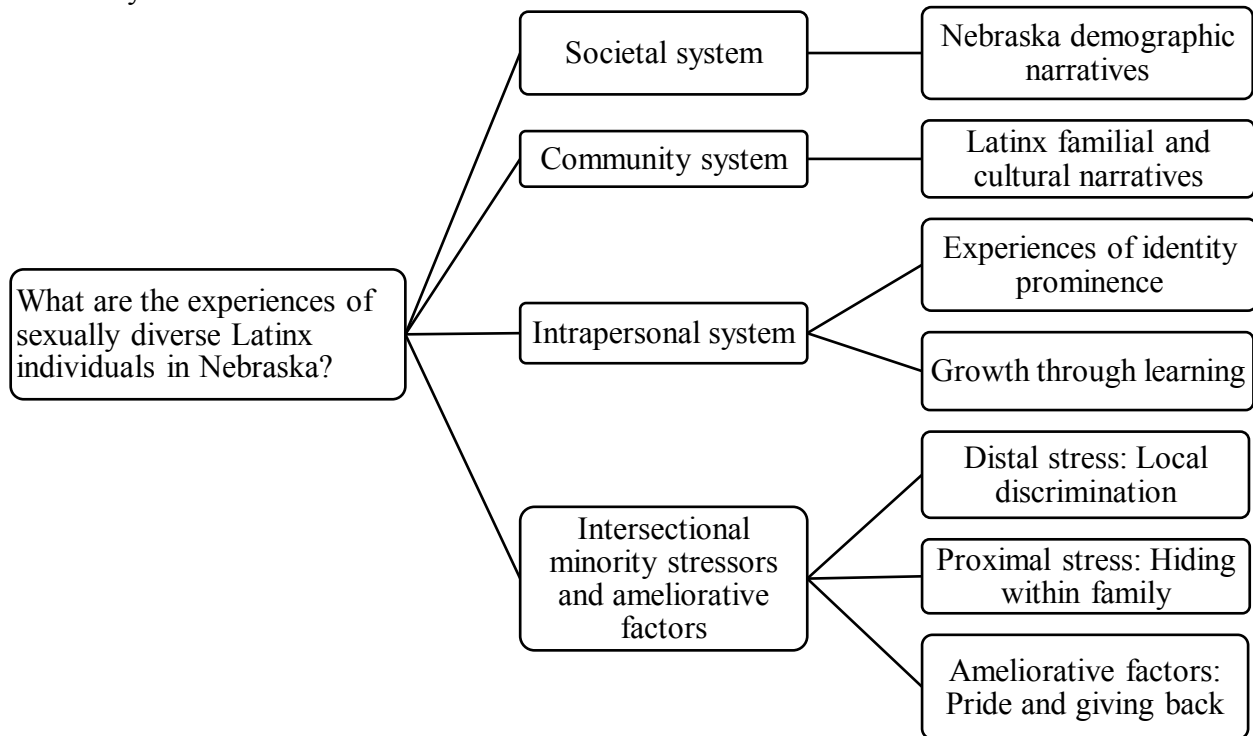
In conducting this research as a cisgender gay Asian man, my interpretations (Daniel) of the data are both augmented and limited by my identity. While my personal experiences lend themselves to more personal knowledge of the experiences of queer people and people of color in general, I do not identify as Latino. Further, my work on this research is limited in the extent to which I was able to give a medium to transgender, gender diverse, and plurisexual perspectives. My queer and non-White identities can thus be seen as both biasing and conducive to accurate research.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL STORIES

Utilizing an intersectional minority stress framework, narratives revealed intrapersonal and interpersonal systemic identity disclosures that sexually diverse Latinx manage; questions of the self, family and relationships, community, and society. Within these categories, thematic narrative analysis resulted in four themes: (a) intersectional identity navigation within systems; (b) intersectional minority stressors and ameliorative factors; (c) connection and disconnection within community and chosen families; and (d) invisibility to visibility (See Figures 2-4). All participants shared common narratives of navigating identity as a personal journey involving balancing sexual and Latinx cultural narratives, exclusion of identities, and daily navigation of a predominately White, heterosexual state. Second, all participants experienced minority stressors including distal, proximal, and ameliorative factors in regards to their sexual and ethnic identities. Third, most participants expressed lacking an intersectional LGBTQ Latinx community, with some of my (Dumayi) interviewees mentioning that that I was their first connection with another sexually diverse Latinx. Yet, all participants reported having safe spaces from personal creation, friendships, and physical spaces. Lastly, our participants outlined specific action steps that would increase community, connection, and safe spaces for sexually diverse Latinx in Nebraska.

Figure 2.

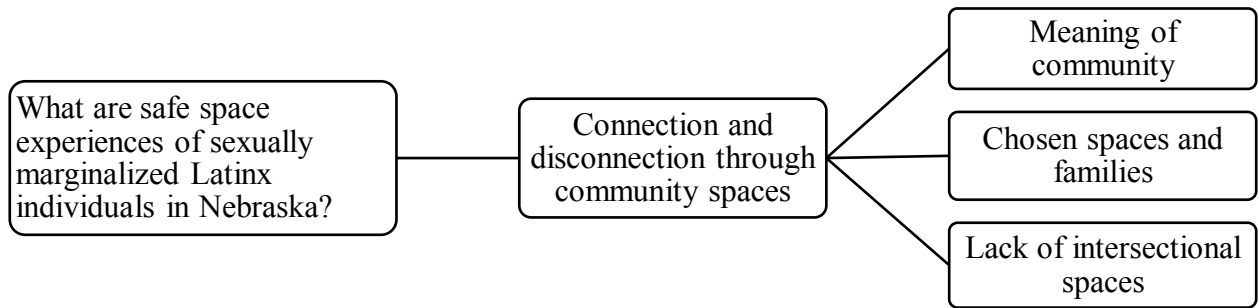
Themes of Sexually Diverse Latinx Experiences (Research Question 1): “What are the experiences of sexually diverse Latinx individuals in Nebraska?”



Source: Authors' Data Analysis

Figure 3.

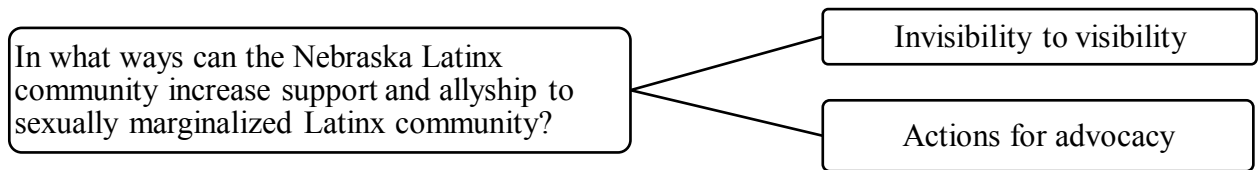
Themes of Sexually Diverse Latinx Experiences (Research Question 2): “What are safe space experiences of sexually marginalized Latinx individuals in Nebraska.”



Source: Authors’ Data Analysis

Figure 4.

Themes of Sexually Diverse Latinx Experiences (Research Question 3): “In what ways can the Nebraska Latinx community increase support and allyship to sexually marginalized Latinx community?”



Source: Authors’ Data Analysis

Intersectional Identity Navigation within Systems

a. Societal system: Nebraska demographic narratives.

All participants shared that navigating their intersecting identities (i.e., Latinx, sexuality, gender), was a journey in Nebraska regardless of their family, location, or age. Rubio, a 53-year-old gay cismale, shared: “It was a long process, you know...having to navigate so many different demographics and communities.” Other participants agreed, describing exploration of community, relationships, and self within Nebraska as “personal” and promoting “growth.”

A few participants shared their experience of living in Nebraska as part of the LGBTQ Latinx community being positive; despite perceived unaccepting ideologies of the state. Nora, a 19-year-old lesbian cismale, expressed her experience in a local religious center as a “very safe place. There’s a lot of queer folk there. That’s one thing I was worried about, because I’m also religious and Nebraska being Nebraska, I was afraid about moving out here and finding

communities that accept me... Just because I feel like there's a lot of stigma for queer people being religious and so I'm really glad that I found the center".

Rubio (53, GCM), shared his experience coming back to Nebraska after living on the West Coast and highlighted preconceptions of LGBTQ acceptance in the Midwest.

I never thought I would be coming back. But it was my partner that wanted to leave the [West Coast] and I showed him this place [Nebraska] because [I] want this lifestyle. It's kind of quiet. [We] came here for a friend's gay wedding and that was eye opening for him. That Midwestern people were open to gay people and had a different concept of Midwesterners. So that's kind of helped them say, 'oh, yeah, we can move to the Midwest.' (Rubio, 53 GCM)

Similarly, Aule a 37-year-old lesbian, described their experience growing up in Nebraska as, "Awesome...overall people respect me, they don't go out of their way to make my day rough for being gay. I even went to school in a smaller town in Nebraska and I was openly gay all the time. I've never been discriminated against or shouted rude names at me. I think people are open minded and nice." Other participants agreed and shared similar sentiments of "being welcomed" and "openness" within Nebraska.

Even so, a couple of participants agreed that the overall lack of diversity in Nebraska was limiting for their experiences and identity growth: "I feel like there's not much of a community as a whole for the Latinx community to accept me" (Nora, 19 LCF). Ariel, a 29-year-old lesbian cisfemale, shared the benefits of moving out of Nebraska, "I moved to the [West Coast], so just being out of [a] land-locked, conservative, white place was very beneficial to me... [in] terms with how I identify, in my sexuality, but also having more representation...of diversity and you just don't get that back home."

b. Community system: Latinx cultural narratives.

All participants shared aspects of the Latinx culture that impacted their identity exploration and navigation, past and present. Our participants shared experiences related to an unspoken cultural theme of "Latinos have their own reality" (Rubio, 53 GCM). Miguel a 49-year-old gay cismale, described this as "Being from Argentina...Latino culture...we, like in any culture...have already a path that you have to follow. Certain things that you are, everyone expects that it will happen a certain way." A few participants were explicit in describing "certain ways" Latinx culture includes "machismo" and "tradition." Any sexuality and/or gender expression outside of heteronormativity and cisgender is "not accepted." The following participants share their perspective on these cultural aspects:

It's all based off of white supremacy. It's all based off of machismo, everything's very man, white...very traditional. The culture is very stuck on...the past...People who are queer, tend to be pushed into a corner. Even like people that are not queer are pushed into [the corner], to make sure that they're always submissive to the upper portion of the culture, to the point where people find themselves secretly, they find things that they like in secrecy. (Nedy, 30 GCM)

With the immigrant Latino community, we have traditional beliefs from our upbringing...Mexico has all this machismo, macho attitude. So, feeling accepted by the Latino community, you have struggles with people who are older in the community but especially with those who are immigrants. (Jaime, 36 GCM)

Within traditional values, a few participants noted family being extremely important and unique to the Latinx community. Rubio (53 GCM) shared,

To Latino people...family is very important...for Anglos, it's a little different... I don't know how they can cut off their families. I mean, for us, we can't cut them off. Like, I would like to have tried that...your mom is your mom...she will always love you, no matter what she gave birth, you can't just cut your family off because they don't accept your sexuality. That's, that's hard for some of them.

Miguel, a 49-year-old gay cismale, shared his perspective of societal pressure and family, adding, "all these fears and all that we're going to be translated to them [parents]. They are going to fear for me...that is inevitable...and although we don't talk much about [it], it is a private matter. That's the kind of the culture." Ana, 24-year-old pansexual cisfemale, expands a "fear and pressure" narrative, and the impact of traditional value:

Particularly when White friends come out, they're accepted much more quickly within their families than anything that I've ever seen with Latino families. It could be due to religion, those traditional values. It just feels like there's so much more at stake as a queer Latina, and like so much more that you can lose because being in the US your family is already everything to you. So, then you come out to them, and then you risk losing them. (Ana, 24 PCF)

A few participants echoed the tradition of family in Latinx culture, highlighting the importance of "connection" and integration within "your own existence." Yet, with such strong values, came feelings of distress for the community. Ana (24 PCF) shared her struggle with cultural loss: "I think that also I don't identify super-heavily with American culture. So, I think that it also would be why I'm so afraid to lose what I feel closer to which would be Latino culture." Kary, a 56-year-old asexual woman shared her thoughts: "I hate the fact that my community is so closed-minded still, and I wish there was something that I could do to open their minds. Short of going to a Catholic church and opening their minds. I don't know how we would do it but it's hard." On an intrapersonal level, Ariel (29 LCF) shared the weight of multiple identities: "Especially minorities,

people of color, who are also LGBTQ, I think we all have a similar experience. We have to work a little harder and work to be accepted, on both fronts. So, on being Latinx and being LGBTQ, putting those two together, it can be exhausting.”

Lastly, a few participants expressed steps that the Latinx community has taken that shows “open-mindedness.” Jaime (36 GCM) shared his experience with the local Cinco de Mayo parade: “They [LGBTQ Latinx and allies] have their own... pride flag on their businesses during the parade and were welcomed in that mainly Hispanic area. I think that’s, that’s awesome and at least a small baby steps, but still very significant for our community coming from our culture.” Participants further described open-mindedness through acceptance of Latinx “millennials, younger generations” and “businesses and organizations.”

c. Intrapersonal system: Experiences of identity prominence.

A few participants shared narratives of identity’s subjective value and centrality, as their sexual identities were valued, while their Latinx identity felt out of place:

When I do hang out with other [Latinx] people, I’m pretty much outcasted because I don’t speak Spanish and I don’t have the accent. I don’t really eat a whole lot of the food. I don’t have the culture and I’ve been told that I’m not a real Mexican because I don’t speak the language and stuff. That kind of sucks, being outcasted by my own people... I just kind of don’t belong. (Aule, 37 Lesbian)

I’m not Mexican enough for my Mexican side and not white enough for my white side, and so it has been hard and especially with, you know, coming out too, like I didn’t have a sense of community in general. To also not know that Latinx side of me, that was hard, too. (Ariel, 29 LCF)

Participants shared their perspectives on grouping and “ethnic prejudice” within the Latinx community, impacting their identity values. A few participants described navigating their day-to-day with a constant acknowledgment of colorism within the local community and the Latinx community.

I know that when I wake up in the morning, I’m like, I have a different experience than someone waking up in West Omaha that is predominantly White. Being queer speaks to my privilege since people think I’m hetero[sexual], don’t they. [Heterosexuals] don’t look twice or think twice. (Lolo, 22 GCM)

I think color is an issue here in Omaha, because it depends on the color of your skin, that the group that you relate to. I think that the Latinos [that] are more white (sic), they’re gonna (sic) relate very [much] with the white community...Latinos [who] are more Black, we’re going to relate more to the African American community. Because I’m White with

an accent, people treat me like a White person. And I had the privilege of entering the, the larger community. I felt the same thing with within the gay community, that we also have those racial, you know, differences. (Rubio 53, GCM)

Miguel (49 GCM) expanded on the differences in Latinx identity through an international narrative: “Every country is so different in Latin America. If you compare the US with Mexico, it’s very different. So basically, navigating that portion alone is already challenging. My reality compared to the reality of the Latinx people is very different. So sometimes we don’t have that commonality about what our day to day life is.” Other participants shared similar sentiments in connection and identity navigation within the Latinx community.

A couple of participants shared the personal and interpersonal limitations of living in Nebraska and the US as a whole, which are rooted in ethnicity. Jaime (36 GCM), expressed, “Identity does affect my progress or my growth, professional growth here in the States. Probably my accent which would have to do with my culture and being an immigrant. So, I believe that also has limited my, my options.” Nedy (30 GCM), shared similar experiences of career obstacles.

My brown side slows me down, which is really a key. Like I recall not getting a position. I assumed because I was queer but the person who was hiring was also clear themselves. So, I assume there was a, there was a lack of interest in having someone on the team that wasn’t ‘the image’ When I worked in corporate world. I remember getting paid less than everyone else at the restaurant...essentially because I wouldn’t last compared to my White counterparts.

Relationally, appearance and sexualization of our participants presented as theme. Nora (19, LCF) shared her experience dating online: “My hair is curly: it’s definitely linked to being Latinx. So, I did a little experiment on social media where I posted pictures when my hair was straight and I looked a lot more White (sic) with a little sprinkle of Latinx. I got so many more messages from straight white men and men in general.”

However, as the Latinx and the LGBTQ community is a smaller community overall, experiences are limited, as one young participant shared, “I feel like there’s not much of a community as a whole for the Latinx community to accept me” (Nora, 19 LCF).

d. Growth through learning.

A majority of participants noted that balancing and navigating marginalized identities within a majority culture is a learning experience.

My experience has been not necessarily a struggle but a learning experience. Moving here to the US from a small town was a cultural shock. Trying to adapt to the new environment

being a minority in a school... of course and is. In a state, in a school [which] is dominantly white, not knowing the language just pointed me out. And of course, still struggling is trying to figure out my, my sexuality. At the same time, as I have to, you know, adapt to the, to the rest of the environment that I was growing up in just fear of the unknown. Every day, just one day at a time. (Jaime 36 GCM)

In addition, learning involved leaning into language through history of the community to personal interactions. Aule (37, Lesbian) described their experience of learning being through, “research about gay history and a lot of coming out stories.” A couple of participants shared testing-the-water narratives searching for “authenticity.” “I’ll just sometimes say things in conversation so that they catch on. And if they do, now you know and if they don’t, that’s on you, not on me... wherever you’re leaning, what feels like you” (Ana, 24 PCF).

A few participants shared thoughts on learned awareness and expression of identity prominence. They shared descriptions of “not being taken seriously” in the LGBTQ community due to gender expression. Other participants shared the necessity to navigate their safety in spaces. Kary (56, AW), shared her experience within gender expression: “With our [LGBTQ] community, I am more relaxed and open. If I am with a group that doesn’t know about me, I act as most female as I can, mostly for my safety. That is the other[s] preach when I am out. I preach ‘be open, be visible, but you have to be smart about it. If it is somewhere you will be in danger, don’t do it.’” Jaime (36, GCM) echoed these thoughts: “On the negative side, I still live with the fear when I go to a new place or meet new people have their reaction. I know I shouldn’t. I think we have been... unnecessarily trained but... it’s just... second nature. Your safety. That’s still an everyday struggle for sure.”

Intersectional Minority stressors

a. Distal stress: Local discrimination.

A few participants shared direct experiences of distal stressors, particularly in towns with rural communities. Aule (37 Lesbian) shared, “My class alone maybe had 30 kids... and they said the gross words like ‘carpet muncher’ and ‘lesbo’ and just like the stupid ones.” Jamie (36 GCM) also experienced, “People calling me names.” Nedy (30 GCM) said, “I’ve had a lot of aggressions towards me; specifically, I get personal questions about genitals.” Ariel (29 LCF), shared an experience of a close physical altercation: “A girl tried to fight me, like actually tried to physically fight me because I was a Mexican lesbian. We didn’t have any people of color at my high school or anything, because of things like that, that would happen.”

b. Proximal stress: Hiding within family.

Almost all participants shared their experiences of needing to conceal their identities within their families. Narratives surrounded cultural norms: “For some reason, culturally...we have to hide it, you know, we can’t share it” (Rubio, 53 GCM). Yet, participants shared feelings of internal struggle with the inability to express themselves or their love. Miguel (49 GCM) shared, “Oh, my God. I mean, it really is a beautiful feeling. But I cannot exercise on that...because of the culture I was born [into] and I heard it very clear. [But] those signs [LGBTQ] were there and I didn’t want to listen because I was thinking that he could not be possible.” Lolo (22 GCM), described his perspective on the influence of traditional Latinx culture on family acceptance:

I feel like there’s a lot more internalized homophobia, stemming mostly because of that machismo culture. The extra judgment within families like commonality with Latino culture, family unity; you’re the family. You’re not just yourself, you represent everyone else as well. That is the fear of judgment. It’s not a good idea for me to come [out] to my family because it’s going to reflect on them as well. I don’t want them to also get run into the risk of them getting heavily criticized [because of me].

A couple of participants shared their thoughts about how families experienced their children’s identities. Some responses surrounded support: “My younger sister is pretty accepting, I think because she works in the medical field. She is really good with it and her children are really good with it too” (Kary, 56 AW). “I think I caught [my mother] off guard mostly. You always hear about people whose [families kick them out or don’t talk to them]. It was never like that” (Ariel, 29 LCF). Conversely, other responses surrounded avoidance: “She did the usual Hispanic parents. You’re just confused, because you still like women? Or why don’t you just pick one or the whole? How am I supposed to have children?” (Nedy 30, GCM). “I think to this day, she just acts like it doesn’t really exist. I had to remind her in the last couple months, that even though I’m in a relationship with a man now, that that really changes nothing... For the most part, everyone that has found out in one way or another has decided to ignore it” (Ana, 24 PCF). Kary (56 AW) shared an experience of complete disconnection from her family: “My father has disowned me and told me to never come back to the house again dressed as a female. So, I will never see my childhood home again. That is where I sit with my parents.”

A couple of participants named mental health issues as being connected to their identities. Aule (37 Lesbian) shared, “I kind of judged myself a lot when I first discovered that I was gay... I think self-loathing and self-hate came at the beginning.” Ana (20 PCF) further shared, “I’ve never came out to my dad...it makes me spiral into the worst state of mind ever. Even when I talked to my mom last, bringing it up to her again, just like made me cry a lot. Like the anxiety that it has caused me to think that I could lose people who mean so much to me is really difficult.”

Lastly, every participant shared they had come from a religious household, and that this influenced how they navigated their sexuality growing up. “[Growing up in a religious household] they didn’t really talk about like sexuality and stuff. But it was an undertone” (Aule, 37 Lesbian). Participants shared themes of “conflict for being LGBTQ” and separation of family with strong religious narratives in their homes. A couple of participants shared experiences with siblings,

I remember her [sister] telling me to just... not tell our parents: that... it was fine, and that she would support me, but to just not tell my parents. But she just still didn’t want my parents to know. Because our parents are Catholic, and just... very traditional in their Mexican ways. (Ana, 24 PCF)

My older brother who is a born-again-Christian has disowned me and the only thing he will ever say to me either by phone or text is that I am praying for you. My sister, she is two years younger than me, she is extremely Catholic and has strong beliefs about the Catholic faith. She will talk to me as long as I don’t talk about being a woman. (Kary, 56 AW)

c. Ameliorative factors: Pride and giving back.

Even with such strong narratives of rejection, tension between intrapersonal identity and cultural expectations, and impact of Latinx traditional value, participants shared experiences of positivity. A few had mottos that direct their lives: “Push boundaries and break stereotypes. Every day, just one day at a time” (Jaime, 36 GNC); “Don’t have to explain myself to people” (Ana, 24 PCF); “I am solely a woman, nothing more, nothing less” (Kary, 56 AW); “I’m not afraid to be who I am. I’m very loud, very vocal, and very passionate about the things I stand up for” (Ariel, 29 LCF).

For a couple of participants, giving back to the community was a way of promoting connection and pride:

I feel like [I am] the ‘Queer One’...[I am] recreating spaces, [identity] has given me a lot of opportunities to continue helping in other aspects. [Identity] got me get my job. I’m working in sexual health. I got an LGBT like, minor, you know, so it was cool. (Nedy, 30 CSM)

[I’m the] leader of [a] local transgender peer-support group, community advocate and activist. I talk to any and all groups that will have me. I have presented for transgender community events, marriage equality rall[ies], and I have been affiliated with [a local organization] that support Latinx families in dealing with LGBT issues. (Kary, 56 AW)

Another participant gifts treats throughout different cities and is connected with organizations via social media to support queer-run businesses in Nebraska. In their words, “I want

to support them.” (Ana, 24 PCF). One participant shared fulfillment in sharing Latinx and LGBTQ culture with others, “Let me share part of my culture, my favorite parts of my culture, let me share this with you. This is kind of something that’s special to me. I haven’t really been able to do that with a lot of other people.” (Nora, 19 LCF). A few participants also engaged in activism through giving back to their families: “I’m kind of [a] role model for [my little sister] and I have been able to be there for her, especially with our parents not really supporting [my sexuality]. I am the go-to person.” (Miguel, 49 GCM).

Connection and Disconnection through Community and Spaces

a. Meaning of community.

A common theme from all participants was recognizing that the LGBTQ+ community (described as ‘the community’ among participants), was a physical and theoretical place of knowledge, awareness, and appreciation for sexual and gender diverse identities. Nora, described the “ease” of being within the community, “Within the community, there are certain expressions in the way that we dress...I feel like people within the community understand that [identity] a lot more. A lot of my straight friends... who aren’t a part of the community don’t really understand that.” (Nora, 19 LCF).

Several other participants agreed, as they navigated their lives in Nebraska, that community-involved spaces were “authentic,” “comfortable,” and “freeing.” Aule (37 Lesbian) described their experiences of community as, “Being with people that were like you: super gay.” Community, to participants, meant physical spaces and people within them such as in LGBTQ+ bars and LGBTQ+ organizations, including the River City Gender Alliance (RCGA), Parents and Friends for Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA) in high schools, LGBTQ+ groups in universities, and pride events. Nora (19 LCF) described her first experience at a university drag show as, “I was just completely blown away and it was a really amazing feeling just to kind of look around and be like, Oh, you’re queer. You’re queer? Like, it felt like a safe environment.” Several other participants’ views resonated with strong feelings of “excitement,” “comfort,” and “welcome[ing]” within the community. Miguel (49 GCM) shared his experience at pride: “What really impacted me was the people around. For me it was like, oh, wow, this is beautiful. I can go to tear[s] of remembering.” Kary (56 AW) further described the personal impact of having these communities:

The impact that they had was amazing. From the second I walked in, everyone was totally accepting. Which is what you would expect from a transgender support group. If I would’ve had any negative experiences, I would’ve crawled back into the closet... People

would give me hugs, say they[‘re] so glad I was there, that I looked so cute... They made a big impact as I became their president! (Kary, 56 AW)

With this narrative, there seems to be an underlying sense of connection through insight, not necessarily needing to be direct and explicit. Ariel (29 LCF) described her experiences with the LGBTQ+ night life: “We had a place for us to go that we knew it was just LGBTQ and while we’re there, that’s our safe spot. You just *know*, and you’re able to be in that spot together with people who are in your *family*.” Another participant shared:

We [the LGBTQ+ community] come together to support one another, no matter what because we know really well what that feels like to be constantly judged by everyone that we live around. Like we hone our struggles and our pain that we’ve experienced, and just kind of turn it on its head and hone it in the best ways we possibly can. We know what it means to have a family and we’re redefining that family and turning it into what it should be. (Lolo, 22 GCM)

b. Lack of intersectional spaces.

When asked if participants were connected to other LGBTQ+ Latinx individuals or community, almost every participant gave a strong response of “No,” “None,” “I don’t have that,” or “I am not involved.” A couple of participants shared about the meaning behind spaces, such as the LGBTQ+ nightlife. Rubio (53 GCM) goes on to explain, “There’s no... face-to-face place [for LGBTQ+ Latinx]. I don’t even go to the bars...I’m married. I have a husband. I’m not looking for anybody and it’s mostly straight people at the bar.” Ana (24 PCF) shared Rubio’s sentiments about the intrusion of heteronormativity into queer spaces,

I think that the queer spaces that I’ve seen here in Nebraska aren’t only filled with queer people; it’s an uncomfortable feeling. Like if I go into a gay bar, where I’m looking forward to it so much, because it’s a queer space. Then sometimes I see like just a group of straight women having like a bachelorette party, and it just doesn’t feel like that’s the place for it. Maybe it is because it’s supposed to be a safe space? It just doesn’t feel right or doesn’t feel as welcoming as a space because of those people that are there. (Ana, 24 PCF)

Many participants shared obstacles surrounding lack of physical space and connection specifically for LGBTQ+ Latinx. Nora (19 LCF) describes her perspective on lack of spaces: “But it’s not something that we [Latinx] talk about a lot because we just kind of are who we are. I feel like it’s very important to a lot of us, but there’s not really a place where we all kind of congregate and get to share that.” Several other participants agreed and described “not having a sense of [LGBTQ+ Latinx] community” in general. Rubio (53 GCM) described reasons behind this lack of community as, “All dependent in relationship with the gay community or the Latino community. At Gay pride, I don’t see that many Latino people around... There’s no connectivity [between the

Latinx and the LGBTQ+ community] to display... [The LGBTQ+ Latinx community is] still emerging.” Lolo (22 GCM) describes potential necessities for a space to be viewed as a safe space: “Whenever there’s no money, or alcohol or, or sex involved, it is a safe, safer space, because people are just looking for genuine connections.”

Kary (56 AW) shared experiences with a local community organization, *A La Familia*, a support for Latinx families dealing with LGBTQ+ issues, and the difficulties of increasing involvement and advocacy of such groups within the Latinx community.

We are not as involved [in the Hispanic community] as we would like it be. There is still a big stigma in the Hispanic community that LGBTQ isn’t right or just needs to be kept quiet, so it is really hard to do much with the Hispanic community. Anytime I have gone the support groups, they have it is the same people or just the small group of one to three people. (Kary, 56 AW).

A couple of participants felt that the LGBTQ+ community had a cultural construct of sexuality and alcohol use that impacted their experiences in safe spaces. Lolo (22 GCM) shared that his experience at an LGBTQ+ bar was, “Not a very validating one. It’s hyper sexualized... I want to party, but I needed to be skinnier and I needed to be lighter skin. I need to be fit. I need to be more flamboyant, but not too flamboyant.” Aule (37 Lesbian) shared, “Things that are for adults and for queer and trans people are surrounded with alcohol or revolved around alcohol.” Nedy (30 GCM) shared similar sentiments on the influence of sex in queer and bar culture:

It becomes a thing where you find your identity through sex, or you find your identity through like the bar culture. Then finding that as your only home, people decide to, especially Latinx people, decide to engulf themselves into that culture, a culture which is very pro white, pro masculine, very sex driven, and then they get stuck there... never really able to create their own space for other people with similar experiences. They just get lost in the White Americans world. That is the gay bar scene.

c. Chosen spaces and families.

All participants shared about chosen, meaningful relationships creating theoretical safe spaces in their lives. Jaime (36 GCM) further describes going beyond a traditional friendship when families are chosen: “It is hard to be yourself. It is hard to be out there. [It] is very scary. But there are places you get to choose your family: you get to choose the people that you are going to be around, that [are] going to uplift you.” Narratives further surrounded a sense of “empowerment” and “holistic support”. Ariel (29 LCF) described her friendships as spaces of guidance for her sexual identity:

My best friend is actually also a lesbian and when she came out, I saw how free she kind of looked and was different. She really helped me [come out] as well. My ex-boyfriend... was like, 'I think you're gay,' and I said, 'No.' He was 100% right. He helped facilitate me even considering that maybe there was something that was different.

Several participants shared the impact of having friendships and mentors they can rely on as their "support systems." Kary (56 AW) describes her friendship with her mentor: "If something is going horribly wrong within my transition, she's the one that I reach out to... She's the one that when I am totally depressed, [and] I want to end everything, I will reach out to her... I love her dearly." She continues on to highlight the significance and longevity of her chosen family in her life,

I was involved with a local Latinx organization... Through that I met one of my really good friends... She is one of my sisters, we will talk about anything and everything... The other person I consider one of my sisters, I have known her for wow, 23 years now, wow... I started working with her downtown... we both became involved in a local Latinx organization... thinking about those two make me happy.

Similarly, Rubio (53 GCM) shared an experience with his first connection and the underlying sense of insight he shared with his friend: "That was a great feeling. Because we kind of like, understood one another and don't have to explain ourselves... you don't have to explain who you are, where you're about, and it's kind of like known, then those are great friendships that you started forming."

From Invisibility to Visibility through Actions for Advocacy.

All participants shared action steps and processes on how to begin to change the lack of understanding and lack of intersectional spaces, and how to increase acceptance within the Latinx community. A common theme to arise revolved around a physical space of belonging, especially for youth:

[There's] probably the need for a community center. I could see for a young person coming out where to go, you know, where to socialize, that is outside the bar scene... I think [Nebraska's leadership] is finally realizing to reach out to the community... in the north Omaha area. I think they[ve] got a church, so that's good. That's a good sign that [spaces for LGBTQ Latinx are] starting, but in general, there's no, nobody thought of the idea of starting a center (Rubio, 53 GCM)

Having more resources, especially at schools, having groups to be a part of. I think that is something that would really help and just... holding events and making sure that we're accepted in both of those communities (Ariel, 29 LCF).

Many participants shared the need for education and visibility within the Latinx community. They shared themes of missing “gaps” and “resources” to work with and to understand sexually diverse Latinx lives. Nedy (30 GCM) further shares the dangers of not having conversations about sexuality and Latinx identities:

There was a [LGBTQ+] suicide in the family one time, and the first thing that came out of my mom’s mouth was, ‘do you think it was her husband [marital turmoil]? Or do you think it was because of a man [affair]?’ We realized that it’s not just lack of information. It’s a lack of very basic notions that are, that need to be unlearned which keep current people from not being able to be accepted or even educated because they don’t even want to mention it.

Participants also shared the impact that limited resources for Latinx and LGBTQ+ had on overall health:

That’s something that’s really lacking in... South Omaha: ...just a lot of education that’s not being given. The resources are there: they have a great community health center. But for whatever reason, education is not. I’m trying to work with other Latinx people to create a space that’s hopefully safe for everyone, but also safe for queer individuals.” (Kary, 56 AW)

Ana (24 PCF) echoed the need for community resources and openness:

Actually, pouring in resources, supporting and listening to the people that are leading queer movements, queer organizations [is so important] ... We’re individuals who are speaking out against things that happen on a daily basis, whether it’s like discrimination... willingness to learn is the most important part. Because in my experience, anybody who immediately rejected what I was telling them, if they just had a willingness to listen, I think that that relationship, for example, could have been saved.

In addition to education, a couple of participants discussed exposure and the need of visibility for the community. Jaime (36 GCM) shared, “Be more vocal...we, [the Latinx community], accept this and this is no matter, sexual orientation or LGBT community welcome. Their support [is needed] not just during pride month but through the year.” In regards to visibility, a theme of representation in the local community and Nebraska overall of gay, Latinx individuals evolved. A couple of participants shared that the lack of “queer role models,” particularly from the Latinx community, was evident. Rubio (53 GCM) shared, “I think [a role model] creates [within] the committee... a sense of belonging. In general, [the gay and Latinx community] are not large [in Nebraska]. I think the only person that we, [the LGBTQ community] have [is] in the legislature: identified herself as a bisexual, but that’s the closest we’ve come.” Lolo (22 GCM) echoed this need to promote representation within the community: “I feel like with those of us that are out, we are out there and we want to make sure that we are represented the way we want to be represented: as a unit”.

CONCLUSION

This study used a unique approach to uplift and empower sexually diverse Latinx voices, a needed shift to visibility and connection for the community. Literature has shown that sexually diverse Latinx experience a multitude of minority stressors from systemic oppressions. These stressors are influenced by culture through the marginalization of identities, lack of support, and disconnection of cultural constructs (Gutierrez 2019; Asencio, 2009). However, sexually diverse Latinx experiences, especially in Nebraska, are scarce. Using an intersectional minority stress framework, this study fills this gap and gives figurative safe spaces to our 10 sexually diverse Latinx participants' experiences.

First, intersectional identity navigation involved interpersonal and broader systems (i.e., societal system, cultural and community system, and self). Within these systems, our participants experienced balancing multiple cultural narratives and constructs from Nebraska demographically. Quite a few participants reported positive experiences of living in Nebraska, identifying the state as sexually diverse and they felt, overall, “welcomed” and “safe” within the societal system. These narratives resonate with current literature, contradicting Midwest rhetoric being stereotypically conservative towards LGBTQ communities and more in favor of support and protection (Fredman et al., 2015; Kazyak & Stange, 2018). Unique to these participants was the lack of diversity in Nebraska: that even with an overall welcome in the state with their sexual identities, there was lack of ethnic community and representation for identity growth. Not only does this support data which maintains that the Midwest is homogenous and heterosexually dominant, it gives further evidence to dimensional identity navigation. These experiences potentially shift an overall rejecting narrative within the Midwest, to rather a need for sexual, ethnic, and gender identity support, representation, and connection. A process that would allow for opportunities of intersectional identity development for sexually diverse Latinx.

Within the Latinx community narrative, participants reported implicit and explicit “rules” of Latinx culture, to which they have “their own reality” (Rubio, 53 GCM). Reality potentially equating to significance of heteronormative value, tradition, and prioritization of family relationships. This supports findings of decreased acceptance for LGBTQ+ people within the Latinx community (Pew Research Center, 2020; Ryan et al., 2010). Further, participants shared themes of tension and acknowledgement of these values, knowing that overall, Latinx communities still stigmatize and erase LGBTQ+ Latinx communities (Cisneros & Branch, 2019). Participants gave explicit examples of Latinx reality impact expressing pressure to conform to gendered values and represent the family as heterocentric. For our participants, there was a deep

fear of losing their families and culture if rules were broken. Thus, expectations of identity in Latinx culture may increase distress of an already vulnerable community.

On an intrapersonal level, participants shared experiences of identity prominence, describing where value and support is given to their identities. A majority of narratives involved their Latinx identities being devalued through Latinx communities, not being “enough,” and being stereotyped or casted due to colorism within the community. In addition, narratives of racism and lack of opportunity in career or relational growth was also described. These results expand literature of ethnic belonging creating space in the predominately White culture (Vega, 2003). Sexually diverse Latinx may be working to create their own spaces within the Latinx community and within White culture. However, in what can be framed as acts of resilience, participants reframed rejecting and exclusive narratives into learning experiences. They took these experiences not only to their schools and communities, but also within themselves through actions, behaviors, and presentation of self. Rather than exploring “who they are,” participants have shift to “how they can learn and express.” From their narratives, examples included diving into LGBTQ history, strategically using affirming language in interactions with others, and maintaining awareness of their surroundings. Unfortunately, the participants’ concerns about maintaining safety is consistent with literature on direct aggressions and attacks on the LGBTQ+ community. Further, spatial awareness is key to theoretical and physical survival (Cisneros & Bracho, 2020; Frost et al., 2015).

Second, participants shared experiences that fall within the minority stress model including discrimination (distal stress), concealment (proximal stress), and intrapersonal resiliency (ameliorative factors). A few participants shared their experiences of direct discrimination with slurs, sexualization, and physical violence, supporting literature of aggression towards sexually diverse Latinx (Asencio, 2009; Frost et al., 2015). However, these experiences were limited as many continued to share positive experiences within their areas. This could potentially portray that overall acceptance and support for the community may aid to buffer against external minority stress experiences. Almost all participants vocalized sexual identity concealment within their families, citing again the implicit and explicit rules of Latinx cultural norms. A few participants reported support for their identities from their families, but a majority of responses surrounded avoidance: paralleling concealment and invisibility narratives within Latinx culture and society overall (Cisneros & Bracho, 2019). In connection to literature, disconnection, disownment, and psychological distress with proximal stress was an evolving theme (Gutierrez, 2019; Velez et al., 2015). In addition, all participants shared growing up in a religious home which emphasized internal and external conflict with their sexual identities. These results suggest that religiosity still plays a significant role in Latinx LGBTQ+ acceptance, understanding, and support (Campesinio, 2006; Diaz, Huebner, Russell, Ryan, & Sanchez, 2010; García, Gray-Stanley & Ramirez-Valles,

2008; Severson et al., 2014). However, unique to our participants, ameliorative factors of intrapersonal strength and giving back to the LGBTQ+ community, seemed to be ways of buffering negative experiences. This supports literature describing self-coping mechanisms as adaptive socialization, pursuing avenues of self-advocacy, community involvement, and multiple identity resolution (Li et al., 2017). Ultimately, our participants reframed dominant narratives of rejection into discourses of authenticity and strength.

Third, participants reported community and safe spaces as places of connection where they were given the ability to “freely” express. They shared a variety of community spaces including local LGBTQ+ organizations and events, further describing the impact of the people within the community. Similar to literature on chosen families and connection, participants reported particular family members, friendships, mentorships, and “the community” as their supportive social networks (Blair & Pukall, 2015). Mirroring Latinx core values and *familismo*, a strong identification and attachment to family (Espinoza, 2010), our participants may have taken this value from their culture into their chosen families and safe spaces. However, participants reported their shared struggles of finding connection and intersectional spaces for their multiple integrated identities. A majority of participants reported a lack of not having any form of connection to the LGBTQ+ Latinx community in Nebraska. They shared obstacles of heteronormative intrusion into safe spaces, lack of visibility within the LGBTQ+ community, and hypersexualization culture; creating adherence to a White, sexualized atmosphere rather than one “genuine connection” supporting literature in dominant social constructs rooted in power (Crenshaw, 1993). Again, another space where sexually diverse Latinx face obstacles in visibility and acceptance.

Lastly, participants had vast ideas and directions for areas of change and support for sexually diverse Latinx community in Nebraska. From the voices of our participants, specific implications and action steps for the Nebraska community include:

- 1) Increase education for the LGBTQ+ community and identity for Latinx community.
- 2) Increase visibility and promotion of safe spaces for local business and organizations.
- 3) Provide a physical area and resources for LGBTQ Latinx connection, such as a community center.
- 4) Connect and educate parents and families on acceptance, identity development, and promotion of discussion around sexuality.
- 5) Provide resources for local queer organizations, movements, and individuals.

- 6) Increase platforms and representation of LGBTQ+ Latinx leaderships and role models.

This study is an important step in better understanding sexually diverse Latinx narratives and offers opportunities to systemically integrate familial, communal, and relational understanding within a diverse community. It further promotes the need to explore the tight reigns of religiosity and potential flexibility with traditional culture and the need to increase education, awareness, space, and advocacy in Nebraska. This study is limited in that it focused on the experiences of Latino/x LGBTQ+ people in Nebraska and may thus be less generalizable to other populations. However, this specific population is uniquely vulnerable and our findings serve to shed light on this. Additionally, our research focused specifically on non-heterosexuality, rather than non-cisgender identities, limiting the conclusions that may be drawn for gender diverse people. Further, the vast-majority of our sample identified as Mexican or Mexican American, which may similarly limit generalizations across nationality.

The small sample size and non-random recruitment methods also lend themselves to lower generalizability. Non-random recruitment methods could potentially have led to those who are intrinsically motivated and already knowledgeable about the study subject to self-select, even given the compensation that participants received. However, the purpose of qualitative research is not primarily generalizability, but to examine a specific population and their unique experiences within the context of a specific spatial and cultural context. For individuals who are already knowledgeable and have reflected on their experiences as Latino/x LGBTQ+ individuals to self-select for our study can thus be seen as useful.

Our study findings should encourage other researchers to further examine the issues faced by Latino/x LGBTQ+ individuals. Future research may focus on how those of this population balance and encounter conflict with their intersectional identities. Specifically, researchers may study what factors lead to the successful integration of these multiple marginalized identities and utilize a framework of resiliency. Even with these limitations, this study was significant in bringing their experiences to the forefront of multicultural literature, community advocacy, and fill gaps of invisibility for the community. The theoretical safe space and community is here in writing, now is the time to set it into motion.

REFERENCES

- Acevedo, J.C. & Stodolska, M. (2017): Empowerment, Resistance, and Leisure among Latino Student Organizations, *Leisure Sciences*, 41(6), 460-476. DOI: 10.1080/01490400.2017.1378141
- Acosta, K. (2010). " How could you do this to me?": how lesbian, bisexual, and queer Latinas negotiate sexual identity with their families. *Black Women, Gender & Families*, 4(1), 1-10.
- Asencio, M. (2009). Migrant Puerto Rican lesbians negotiating gender, sexuality, and ethnonationality. *NWSA Journal*, 1-23.
- Blair, K. & Pukall, C. (2015). Family matters, but sometimes chosen family matters more: Perceived social network influence in the dating decisions of same- and mixed-sex couples. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, 24(3), 257–270. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjhs.243-A3>
- Bowleg, L., Belgrave, F. Z., & Reisen, C. A. (2000). Gender roles, power strategies, and precautionary sexual self-efficacy: Implications for Black and Latina women's HIV/AIDS protective behaviors. *Sex Roles*, 42(7-8), 613-635.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford university press.
- Cambridge. (n.d.). <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/midwest>
- Cisneros, & Bracho, C. (2020). Undocuqueer Stress: How Safe are "Safe" Spaces, and for Whom? *Journal of Homosexuality*, 67(11), 1491–1511. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2019.1607684>
- Crenshaw, K. (1993). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and the violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43, 1241-1299.
- Fetner, T., Elafros, A., Bortolin, S., & Drechsler, C. (2012). Safe spaces: Gay-straight alliances in high schools. *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie*, 49(2), 188-207. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1755-618X.2011.01290.x>

- Fredman, A. J., Schultz, N. J., & Hoffman, M. F. (2015). “You’re moving a frickin’ big ship” The challenges of addressing LGBTQ topics in public schools. *Education and Urban Society*, 47(1), 56-85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124513496457>
- Frost, D. M., Lehavot, K., & Meyer, I. H. (2015). Minority stress and physical health among sexual minority individuals. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 38(1), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10865-013-9523-8>
- García, D. I., Gray-Stanley, J., & Ramirez-Valles, J. (2008). “The priest obviously doesn’t know that I’m gay”: The religious and spiritual journeys of Latino gay men. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 55(3), 411–436. doi:10.1080/00918360802345149
- Goldberg, A. E., Kinkler, L. A., Richardson, H. B., & Downing, J. B. (2012). On the border: Young adults with LGBQ parents navigate LGBTQ communities. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 59(1), 71 –85. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024576>
- Green, Kearbey, J., Wolgemuth, J., Agosto, V., Romano, J., Riley, M., & Frier, A. (2015). Past, present, and future of assessment in schools: A thematic narrative analysis. *Qualitative Report*, 20(7), 1111. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2229>
- Gutierrez, D. M. (2019). *Adapting and utilizing the minority stress model: adding sexually marginalized Latinx voices and cultural factors* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Iowa).
- Kazyak, & Stange, M. (2018). Backlash or a Positive Response?: Public Opinion of LGB Issues After Obergefell v. Hodges. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 65(14), 2028–2052. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2017.1423216>
- Institute for Latino Studies Communications Group. 2002. *Bordering the Mainstream: A Needs Assessment of Latinos in Berwyn and Cicero, Illinois*. University of Notre Dame. January 2002. <https://curate.nd.edu/downloads/kw52j675f4n>. Accessed 29 October 2021.
- Li, M. J., Thing, J. P., Galvan, F. H., Gonzalez, K. D., & Bluthenthal, R. N. (2017). Contextualizing family microaggressions and strategies of resilience among young gay and bisexual men of Latino heritage. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 19(1), 107-120.
- Lingard L. (2019). Beyond the default colon: Effective use of quotes in qualitative research. *Perspectives on medical education*, 8(6), 360–364. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-00550-7>

- Noel, H. (2017). [Review of the book *Latino Heartland: Of Borders and Belonging in the Midwest*, by Sujey Vega]. *Diálogo* 20(1), 205-206. [doi:10.1353/dlg.2017.0017](https://doi.org/10.1353/dlg.2017.0017).
- Martinez, O., Dodge, B., Reece, M., Schnarrs, P. W., Rhodes, S. D., Goncalves, G., ... & Fortenberry, J. D. (2011). Sexual health and life experiences: Voices from behaviourally bisexual Latino men in the Midwestern USA. *Culture, health & sexuality*, 13(9), 1073-1089. doi:10.1080/13691058.2011.600461.
- Merriam, & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: a guide to design and implementation 4th edition*. Jossey-Bass.
- Meyer, I. (1995). Minority stress and mental health in gay men. *Journal of Health Sciences and Social Behavior*, 36, 38–56.
- Meyer I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(5), 674–697. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674>
- Muro, M., DeVol, R., Whiton, J., & Maxim, R. (2018, October 25). *The American Heartland is doing better than prevailing narratives, but serious challenges remain*. The Avenue. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/10/25/trends-in-the-heartland/>
- Millard, Chapa, J., & Burillo, C. (2004). *Apple pie & enchiladas: Latino newcomers in the rural Midwest / Ann V. Millard and Jorge Chapa, with Catalina Burillo [and others]*. (First edition..). University of Texas Press.
- Molina, O., Yegidis, B., & Jacinto, G. (2019). The Pulse Nightclub Mass Shooting and Factors Affecting Community Resilience Following the Terrorist Attack. *Best Practices in Mental Health*, 15(2), 1-15.
- Morales, Yakushko, O. F., & Castro, A. J. (2012). Language Brokering Among Mexican-Immigrant Families in the Midwest. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 40(4), 520–553. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000011417312>
- Moree, D. (2018). Qualitative approaches to studying marginalized communities. In G. Noblit (Ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.246>

- Movement Advancement Project. (November 2021). *The Delta variant & the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on LGBTQ households in the U.S.* www.lgbtmap.org/2021-covid-lgbtq-households.
- Pew Research Center (2020). Views about homosexuality in the Midwest. *Religious Landscape Study*. <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/region/midwest/views-about-homosexuality/>
- Pryor, J. T. (2018). Visualizing queer spaces: LGBTQ students and the traditionally heterogendered institution. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 15(1), 32-51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2017.1395307>
- Raffaelli, & Wiley, A. R. (2013). Challenges and strengths of immigrant Latino families in the rural Midwest. *Journal of Family Issues*, 34(3), 347–372. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X11432422>
- Ramos, Carvajal-Suarez, M., Trinidad, N., Quintero, S., Molina, D., & Rowland, S. A. (2021). “No somos máquinas” (We are not machines): Worker perspectives of safety culture in meatpacking plants in the Midwest. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 64(2), 84–96. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajim.23206>
- Rodríguez. (2020). Beyond Boystown: Latinidad on the outskirts of queer Chicago nightlife. *Latino Studies*, 18(2), 277–285. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41276-020-00247-7>
- Rodriguez-Diaz, C. E., Guilamo-Ramos, V., Mena, L., Hall, E., Honermann, B., Crowley, J. S., ... & Millett, G. A. (2020). Risk for COVID-19 infection and death among Latinos in the United States: examining heterogeneity in transmission dynamics. *Annals of epidemiology*, 52, 46-53. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annepidem.2020.07.007>
- Ryan, C., Russell, S. T., Huebner, D., Diaz, R., & Sanchez, J. (2010). Family acceptance in adolescence and the health of LGBT young adults. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, 23(4), 205-213. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6171.2010.00246.x>
- Severson, N., Muñoz-Laboy, M., & Kaufman, R. (2014). ‘At times, I feel like I’m sinning’: The paradoxical role of non-lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender-affirming religion in the lives of behaviourally-bisexual Latino men. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 16(2), 136–148. doi:10.1080/13691058.2013.843722

- Testa, Habarth, J., Peta, J., Balsam, K., & Bockting, W. (2015). Development of the Gender Minority Stress and Resilience Measure. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 2(1), 65–77. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000081>
- Tong, Sainsbury, P., & Craig, J. (2007). Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 19(6), 349–357. <https://doi.org/10.1093/intqhc/mzm042>
- UCLA School of Law Williams Institute. (2019). <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/>
- Vega, S. (2015). *Latino Heartland*. New York University Press.
- Valdivia, C., Jeanetta, S., Flores, L. Y., Morales, A., & Martinez, D. G. (2012). Latino/a wealth and livelihood strategies in rural Midwestern communities. *Choices*, 27(316-2016-6522).
- Velez, B. L., Moradi, B., & DeBlare, C. (2015). Multiple oppressions and the mental health of sexual minority Latina/o individuals. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 43, 7–38. doi:10.1177/0011000014542836
- Villatoro, A. P., Morales, E. S., & Mays, V. M. (2014). Family culture in mental health help-seeking and utilization in a nationally representative sample of Latinos in the United States: The NLAAS. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 84(4), 353-363.
- Woodley, X. M., & Lockard, M. (2016). Womanism and snowball sampling: Engaging marginalized populations in holistic research. *The Qualitative Report*, 21(2), 321-329. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/09/23/who-is-hispanic/>

PREVIOUS OLLAS REPORTS

A complete list of the OLLAS Reports and their pdf files are available at www.unomaha.edu/ollas

1. Gouveia, Lourdes and Powell, Mary Ann (2005). Educational Achievement and the Successful Integration of Latinos in Nebraska: A Statistical Profile to Inform Policies and Programs. OLLAS Special Report No. 1. Omaha, NE: Office of Latino Latin American Studies (OLLAS) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.1012>.
2. Casas, J.F., Ryan, C.S., Kelly-Vance, L., Ryalls, B.O., Ferguson, A., & Nero, C.L. (2005). Examining the impact of parental involvement in a dual language program: Implications for children and schools. OLLAS Special Report No. 2. Omaha, NE: Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.1011>.
3. Benjamin-Alvarado, Jonathan (2006). Latino Political Participation in Nebraska: The Challenge of Enhancing Voter Mobilization and Representation. OLLAS Special Report No. 3. Omaha, NE: Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS), University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.1010>.
4. Arbelaez, Maria (2007). Religion and Community: Mexican Americans in South Omaha (1900- 1980). OLLAS Special Report No. 4. Omaha, NE: Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.1009>.
5. Decker, Christopher with Jerry Deichert and Lourdes Gouveia. (2008). Nebraska's Immigrant Population. Economic and Fiscal Impacts. OLLAS Special Report No. 5. Omaha, NE: Office of Latino/Latin American Studies(OLLAS), University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.1008>.
6. Benjamin-Alvarado, Jonathan (2009). Project Animate: Promoting Student Civic Participation through Latino Voter Mobilization. OLLAS Special Report No. 6. Omaha, NE: Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.1007>.
7. Lourdes Gouveia, Jonathan Benjamin-Alvarado, Yuriko Doku, Alejandra Toledo, and Sergio Sosa (2010). The Omaha Site: Migrant Civil Society Under Construction, Reports on Latino Immigrant Civic Engagement, No. 8. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.
8. Decker, Christopher with Jerry Deichert and Lourdes Gouveia. (2012). The Economic Impact of Latin American & other Immigrants in Iowa, Nebraska & the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area. Omaha, NE: Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS), University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.1005>.
9. Ramos, A., Rajaram, S., Gouveia, L., Doku, Y., Toure, D., Zhang, A., & Manske, S. Health Profile of Nebraska's Latino Population. (2013). A collaborative effort of the College of Public Health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, the Office of Latino and Latin American Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the Office of Health Disparities and Health Equity at the Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.1004>.
10. Gastón, María Teresa, Lourdes Gouveia, Christian Espinosa Torres, Clare Maakestad and Christopher C. Blue. (2013). Invisible & Voiceless: Latinos in Council Bluffs, Iowa: Executive Summary. Omaha, NE: Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS). University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.1003>.
11. Aliaga Linares, Lissette. (2014). Latino Businesses in Nebraska: A Preliminary Look. Omaha, Nebraska: Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.903>.

12. Aliaga Linares, Lissette. (2014). A Demographic Portrait of the Mexican-Origin Population in Nebraska. Omaha, Nebraska: Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.1002>.
13. Cogua-Lopez, Jasney, Lissette Aliaga-Linares and Lourdes Gouveia. (2015). Latinos throughout the City: A Snapshot of Socio demographic Differences in Omaha, Nebraska. Omaha, NE: Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.1001>.
14. Aliaga Linares, Lissette and Jasney Cogua-Lopez. (2016). Latinos and the Economic Downturn in Nebraska: Demographic and Socioeconomic Trends 2005-2013/2014. Omaha, NE: Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.1000>.
15. Novak, E. A., Kulig, T. C., & Doña-Reveco, C. (2021). Human trafficking and the T visa process: Insights from legal representatives working with victims from Latin America. OLLAS Report #15. Office of Latino/Latin American Studies, University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.1016>.
16. Decker, C. (2021). The Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Immigrant Populations on Nebraska and Omaha: Evidence from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey. OLLAS Report #16. Office of Latino/Latin American Studies, University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.1017>.
17. Doña-Reveco, C. & Cuellar, M. (2022). Vulnerable, yet Resilient: The Impact of COVID-19 on Latino-Owned Businesses in South Omaha. OLLAS Report #17. Omaha: University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.915>.
18. Gutierrez, D. & Nguyen, D. (2022). “The Greatest Path to Acceptance is to Know We Exist:” Capturing Narratives of Sexually Diverse Latinx in Nebraska. OLLAS Report #18. Omaha: University of Nebraska at Omaha. <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.ollas.1018>



Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS)
Univeristy of Nebraska at Omaha
OLLAS Report #18
ISSN 2768-1963