"I NEED THESE CREDENTIALS": BLACK AND LATINO MEN NAVIGATE OPPRESSION AND PRIVILEGE AS A PART OF THEIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATIONAL LANDING SPACES

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Using the crossover capital framework (Salinas, 2015), this study situated the lived experiences of 12 Black and Latino men community college students across multiple places and spaces, with each space having the potential to oppress and/or privilege the individual. This qualitative phenomenological study revealed that participants actively pursued opportunities to navigate new environments that would potentially privilege them in ways that their home environments would or could not. This paper provides implications for practice and research to advance support for Black and Latino men community college students to navigate their sense of identity in various educational landing spaces via the value they place on access to resources and relationships.

Although men continue to enroll in college at higher rates than they did 10 years ago, their enrollment lags considerably in relation to women (Mangan, 2022). This lag in enrollment among men represents an exodus that has been decades in the making (Field, 2021; Mangan, 2022). When examined more deeply, an even more significant gap exists that separates men of color from white men and women of color (Postsecondary National Policy Institute [PNPI], 2022), particularly amongst Black and Latino men students. Several studies have recommended the importance of understanding how Black and Latino men make sense of their educational pathways in relation to their sense of motivation (Cabrera et al., 2016; Camacho, 2021; Center for

Community College Student Engagement [CCCSE], 2014; Fields, 2021; Rodriguez et al., 2016).

This study brings attention to Black and Latino men community college students' lived experiences by exploring how they navigated oppression and privilege between different spaces and places (i.e., home, community college, and points of social interaction; Vasquez et al., 2020). More specifically, their sense of oppression and privilege reflected their understanding of access to different forms of capital, and the spaces and social norms that informed their sense of access (Bourdieu, 1986). Therefore, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how Black and Latino men community college students navigated oppression and privilege experiences as a part of their educational landing spaces. The following research questions guided the study: How do Black and Latino men community college students navigate oppression and privilege between different spaces and places? And, how do the community college experiences of Black and Latino men students inform their understanding of self-awareness within educational landing spaces?

They Care About Education:

Framing Oppression and Privilege through the Lens of Motivation

The postsecondary education experiences of Black and Latino men are often positioned through a deficit lens (Brooms, 2020; Harris & Wood, 2013). The challenges these men experience are not based on an intrinsic desire to be unsuccessful but on an education system that needs to understand their perspective (Wood & Essien-Wood, 2012; Harper & Davis III, 2012). In a report by the CCCSE (2014), Laura Rendón shared, "Black and Latino males are among the least understood community college

students" (p. 4). Much has been said about the great equalizing nature of education (Growe & Montgomery, 2003), but only if the system can understand the motivations of Black and Latino undergraduate men students in ways that are equitable and meaningful (Felix et al., 2015; Felix & Gonzalez, 2022).

The decision to attend college can indeed be influenced by various factors, including the concept of capital (Bourdieu,1986; Brooms, 2020; Wood & Essien-Wood, 2012). For Black and Latino men, attending college reflects a choice to gain access to different forms of capital and the norms relevant to engaging with the benefits of the capital they will encounter within systems of higher education (Bourdieu,1986; Harper & Davis III, 2012; Ortiz et al., 2019; Sáenz et al., 2018). For these students, this choice reflects a strategic response to addressing their oppression and fostering their social mobility (Harper & Davis III, 2012; Rodriguez et al., 2019). To this end, their community college experiences do not happen in a vacuum. Black and Latino men experience higher education in relation to overlapping spaces and places (i.e., home, school, and points of social interaction; Vasquez, 2020).

Stereotype Threat Experiences of Black and Latino Men Community College Students

Black and Latino men students experience various challenges in community colleges, and they need to be supported through their educational experiences. The challenges of racial stereotypes faced by men of color, often perpetuated in the form of stereotype threat, can seriously and negatively impact "one's sense of belonging, engagement, academic achievement, and persistence" (Harper, 2006, p. 22). Steele's (1997) work on stereotype threat described the "social – psychological threat" of

students from marginalized racial and/or ethnic groups (p. 14). This threat occurs when confronted by a situation where they can be reduced to, or confirm, a negative stereotype of their ethnic and/or racial group (Camacho, 2021). Being confronted by stereotypes through microaggressions, and other forms of overt discrimination, cause Black and Latino men to become hyperaware of their "race/ethnicity when placed in a position in which their performance could be judged as confirming or disconfirming a negative stereotype" (Fischer, 2010, p. 20). These negative stereotypes that persist on college campuses require Black and Latino men students to navigate different identities constantly, often forcing them to manage different behavioral expectations in diverse and interracial settings on campus.

Black and Latino Men Students' Intersectional Identities

The postsecondary experience exposes many Black and Latino-identifying men students to campus experiences that can shape their racial/ethnic identities. In examining their self-identities, these students undergo a process of meaning-making throughout their college experiences (Reyes, 2018; Torres et al., 2019). This meaning-making process is inherently socially constructed and influenced by societal views of Black and Latino men (Camacho, 2021; Camacho et al., 2021; Núñez et al., 2013). Therefore, it is important to understand how various factors influence these identities in the college environment (Harris & Wood, 2013; Rodriguez et al., 2019). Scholars and practitioners suggest the importance of validating the intersection of multiple social identities (Camacho, 2021). In particular, how this intersection may significantly shape students' experiences and outcomes (Rodriguez et al., 2016). As a part of this, scholars and practitioners must not just stop at the acknowledgment of multiple identities as a

nuanced means by which to understand the experiences of Black and Latino men college students, but they must also acknowledge the pull that these identities have on the individual social identities held by these individuals (Cuellar & Salinas, 2022; Flores & Román, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

For this study, the crossover capital framework (Salinas, 2015) was used to analyze and explore how Black and Latino men students navigated oppression and privilege as a part of their community college experience. By using the crossover capital framework, we attempted to know how these Black and Latino community college men students interacted with communities of people, places, and things. Salinas (2015, 2017) stated that all individuals came to, consciously or unconsciously, understand when one crosses psychological, emotional, and geographical borderlands. Furthermore, Vasquez et al. (2020) described "the process of crossing visible and invisible spaces leads individuals to move from one *landing space* to another *landing space*" and might perform their social identities within any space (p. 91), where one might lose and gain oppression and privilege through their interactions with "new cultures, environments, spaces, and ideas through every interaction with communities of people, places, and things" (Salinas, 2015, p. 121). Salinas described *landing spaces* as:

> places where people have created and gained a sense of comfort as a form of knowing like-minded communities. A landing space depicts the concept of having an understanding that people can code-switch, if needed, and adapt to places and environments where they feel supported, safe, and comfortable given the situation, time, and location. (Salinas, 2015, p. 121)

In addition, the crossover capital framework helps individuals to understand "the rewarding and challenging experiences of the [individuals]… while navigating and learning different settings, customs, and cultures in order to access new landing spaces" (Salinas, 2015, p. 121). For example, a Black or Latino man student can crossover from one community to another community, from home to school, or from one racially diverse student group to a non-racially diverse student group (Vasquez et al., 2020).

Crossing from one space to another allows individuals to adapt to places, situations, and environments. Individuals can also recognize and negotiate their leadership development, self-awareness, community involvement, and academic and career success by crossing from one space to another. For example, when Black or Latino community college students experience racism, discrimination, or oppression, they might take additional leadership opportunities to combat those experiences. The crossover capital framework aims to understand the positive and negative experiences of individuals while they are learning and crossing different environments (Salinas, 2015; Vasquez et al., 2020)

Participants from this study negotiated multiple spaces, including socio-cultural geographical boundaries, race and ethnicity, and oppression. As a result, they understood their behavior in different environments and identities at home and at their community college, their behavior in inter-racial versus intra-racial settings, and how to navigate racial stereotypes in community colleges. Based on the participants' experiences of oppression, students learned how to engage in an unfamiliar space and communicate with people from different communities, race/ethnicity, values, and

experiences to obtain access and opportunity. Through these experiences, Black and Latino community college men students developed a sense of crossover capital when they "crossed intellectual, psychological, emotional, and geographical" borderlands when interacting with communities of people, places, environments, settings, and things (Salinas, 2015, p. 120).

Methodology

This study was part of a larger study involving focus groups with 12 Black and Latino undergraduate men students and three men of color staff at a 2-year HSI community college in southeastern Florida (see Elliott et al., 2018; Salinas et al., 2019; Torrens et al., 2017). Federally recognized as an HSI in 2014, the diverse institution has 38,953 students, of whom 28% are Black, and 33% are Hispanic/Latino. Utilizing a qualitative approach, this study aimed to explore how Black and Latino men students experience and navigate oppression and privilege at community colleges. Through a phenomenological approach, the researchers were able to delve deeply into the meaning-making (Moustakas, 1994) that participants attributed to their understanding of privilege and oppression in relation to their community college experiences.

Participants

While only 12 Black and Latino men community students participated in this study, overall, 18 students were recruited through a men of color support program sponsored by the community college. Participants were asked to volunteer for the study; if participants agreed to participate in the focus groups, they had to self-identify as a man of color and complete an Institutional Review Board (IRB) consent form. All 12 student participants of this study self-identified as Black/African American and/or

Latino/Hispanic men and were enrolled in a community college at the time of the study. Students' ages ranged from 19 years old to 39 years old. The 12 student participants were divided into three focus groups; each focus group had four students. Focus groups took place at their community college.

Data Collection

The primary data collected for this study originated from an ongoing study on men of color and how they understood the influence of oppression and privilege on their experiences at their community college. Therefore, this study's analytical approach (data collection and data analysis) was similar to our other studies (see Elliott et al., 2018; Salinas et al., 2019; Torrens et al., 2017). Three focus groups were conducted using a semi-structured protocol designed to probe how students' aspirations and success were impacted by factors such as masculinity, peer pressure, perceptions, mentorship, and campus belonging and how these experiences informed their community college experiences. Each focus group was 60-minutes long and conducted in a private classroom at the community college. The focus groups took place at a one-day retreat of the institution's men of color support program. Participants were assigned a pseudonym to protect their identity.

Data Analysis

After reviewing all the materials at least once, coding was facilitated via multiple coding cycles. The research question and methodological design were used during each cycle to guide the process. We used three coding phases to analyze the data. In the first coding phase, descriptive coding was used to analyze the data (Saldaña, 2013). In the second coding phase, pattern coding was used to consolidate related codes into

smaller sets (Saldaña, 2013). In the third coding phase, axial coding was used to identify dominant categories and themes (Creswell, 2012; Saldaña, 2013). Using these three coding phases, the researchers made meaning of how participants of this study navigated different landing spaces to describe the findings (Moustakas, 2004). During the data analysis process, and to capture the essence of the 12 Black and Latino men community college students who participated in this study, three themes emerged and made up the findings of this study.

Findings

Each of the three findings helped to create a more comprehensive understanding of how the participants understood the different spaces in their lives that afforded them different forms of oppression and privilege. The first and second findings, 1) "*You can change if you desire to remove yourself from that environment": When Black and Latino men consider the limitations of their home environment;* and *2) "I feel like I live in a world where I have to please two groups of people": When Black and Latino men navigate different spaces and places*, provide answers to the first research question by offering insight into how the participants understood the relative nature of privilege and oppression via different forms of capital when considered through the lens of their home environments versus their school environments. The third finding, 3) *"If you want Black, I can give you Black": Self-awareness and growth in the pursuit of opportunity*, answers the second research question by offering insight into the challenges Black and Latino men experience as a part navigating different spaces and places in relation to learned norms for acquiring capital.

"You can change if you desire to remove yourself from that environment": When Black and Latino Men Consider the Limitations of their Home Environment

Participants expressed a dichotomy between their home environment and their community college environment. Many participants associated their homes and communities with adversity and difficulty. In contrast, they associated their campus with opportunity. When asked what factors influenced him to attend college, Justin answered, "The environment basically. The environment I grew up in was a drug environment. Most of my family sells drugs. Between the house being kicked in and having run-ins and dealings with the police." For Steven, a single father, previously incarcerated, the community college allowed him to distance himself from certain people and behaviors physically. In discussing the fatigue he experienced with some aspects of the community, Steven said, "I got tired of the same thing…looking at the same corners, the same people and lifestyles. People that I was close to… strung out on drugs. I don't want to be like that." Greg expressed similar sentiments, saying:

> To know that there is a life better than where we were once, that you can change if you desire to remove yourself from that environment to create that change. As long as you stay in that environment that doesn't help you to change, you will never go anywhere. You will die in that environment, but removing yourself is what helps you to live, to see that there is another way of life other than what I was once told or taught.

In some ways, the community college provided a place of refuge. A space where the participants could envision a way forward toward a different and better life. While this may be an expected finding for a residential college (Collison, 1992), this is notable for a community college.

For the students, the most tangible benefit the community college offered them, particularly in moving away from the oppressive nature of their homes and communities,

was the access to and availability of various forms of capital. Students described

college as an avenue for financial capital that is unavailable in their communities. Kyle

explained:

> I really come to school because, in order for me to get far in life, I need these credentials. I can't get anywhere. I can't make money; I can't have my dream house or my car without coming to college first. College is my only way out of poverty.

The community college also provided access to social capital that they could not get at

home. Trey noted that he came to college to find meaning and motivation. He said, "I

had been told that college has been a place for people that considered you as human

beings and saw that they tried to look into your potential and see where you could be a

help to society." Trey specifically noted his relationship with professors as a direct

connection to an enhanced sense of social capital via exposure to cultural and

intellectual capital he would not have had access to at home.

While Kyle described the importance of a college education as a mechanism to

access future financial capital, other students highlighted the more immediate material

capital available to them as a direct result of attending their community college. To this

end, many students made the distinction between material capital available at the

school that was inaccessible at home. For example, Will noted, "We try to figure out

what to do when the community college is closed. We are so used to getting up and

going to college and going on the computer… having resources that you don't have at

home."

Participants expressed clear differences between their environment at home and

the environment at their community college. In this way, the community college

represents a landing space that represents access to opportunities and privilege that is

not often available at their home and/or communities' landing spaces. This finding

underscores an expressed dichotomy between their different environments that

advances a conscious understanding on the part of Black and Latino men community

college students' experiences across multiple places and spaces.

"I feel like I live in a world where I have to please two groups of people": When

Black and Latino Men Navigate Different Spaces and Places

Similar to, but distinct from, the first finding, participants expressed a sharp

dichotomy between their behavior in intra-racial and inter-racial settings, both at home

and at the community college. Many students described feeling conflicted or ostracized

due to their inability to meet intra-racial linguistic expectations. For example, Greg

noted, "There is always a pressure to identify with your race whenever I am with my

friends or even my family – because I am in college, there is a certain way I talk – they

feel that sometimes I act white." Conversely, students also experienced conflict with

linguistics in interracial groups. For example, Steven described an episode where trying

to fit into the linguistic expectations of his inter-racial campus setting contributed to a

breakdown:

> I had people that didn't like me just because of who I was… my tattoos, and
> everything. My personality. I changed the way I talked, and it still was an issue to
> the point that one day I broke down on campus, and I couldn't take it because I
> was trying to be someone that I wasn't.

Like Steven, David spoke of the difficulty of balancing the linguistic expectations in inter-

racial and intra-racial groups. He said, "I do feel that pressure to speak more proper and

then sometimes speak a little less proper. And then sometimes walk a certain way and

then some other times walk another certain way".

In each focus group, the participants described how they adapted their behavior to the inter-racial setting of their college. Students described this as a necessary skill to combat stereotypes. For example, as a student leader, Steven tells other students, "Pull your pants up. If you don't want people to see you a certain way, put on a shirt and tie sometimes. Know how to act in whatever environment you are in; adapt to where you are." Despite the benefits of adapting to inter-racial settings, the students also noted various drawbacks. Sam described the criticism he received from other Black people because of gaining this skill after going to college, stating that "People deep inside can be jealous because they're not able to adapt like you are." In addition to linguistics, the emotional trauma Steven described above was partly due to his awareness that even coping in inter-racial settings could not help him avoid all bias. Other students shared this awareness and frustration. Paul felt that no matter their actions or settings, people of color would always be judged simply because of their skin color. Greg expressed a similar exasperation but with both intra-racial and inter-racial peers:

> I feel like I live in a world where I have to please two groups of people. I feel I do have to please my fellow Blacks, and I feel like I have to please white people. The whites will never be satisfied with what I do or say, and the Blacks probably [will not] either… I've got two things I'm trying to balance… that middle piece where I'll bring those two worlds together and where those two worlds are going to be ok with who I am and what I am.

Greg and other participants described feeling conflicted or ostracized due to their inability to meet intra- and inter-racial linguistic expectations, which caused them to discover the differences between the landing spaces in their environments.

In this finding, Black and Latino men described how they navigated different spaces and places to acknowledge expectations that informed their behaviors. In acknowledging these expectations, the participants became aware of their privilege,

oppression, opportunity, and safety while navigating their community college experiences.

"If you want Black, I can give you Black": Self Awareness and Growth in the Pursuit of Opportunity

The students discussed feeling unfairly labeled at their community college. Several participants responded in the affirmative when asked if they felt judged because they were Black and/or Latino. Bryan spoke to this experience by sharing: "You can't really have a lot of fun because then people are going to look at you differently. You can't really smile and have joy. They hate to see a Black man with a smile". In response, he shared that he goes to great lengths to portray himself to the community in a positive light. To highlight his awareness of how the community sees him, Bryan said, "We're trying to do the opposite, and instead of being intimidating, we want to smile and be approachable to people."

In addition to feeling unfairly labeled, students expressed frustration by feeling unfairly limited on their campuses. Steven had behavioral problems as a child and remembered teachers telling him: "That's because you're African American. Because your mom's Hispanic… that's why you're the way you are. You're not going to become anything because of your background." Now, he and other participants see how these labels and stereotypes persist in college. Carlos reaffirmed this idea by sharing, "People see you as their past experiences with certain people, and they identify you by those experiences. We have an image about other races: White, Latino, Black".

This ability to identify and name the oppressive nature of campus racism speaks to the challenges that marginalized Black and Latino men students face when

confronted with the need to navigate multiple pathways and employ the multiple forms

of capital that they use to cross from one space to another (Salinas, 2015; 2017).

However, these experiences can lead to opportunities for self-awareness and growth

(Salinas, 2015). Some participants of this study showed clear examples of how they

could use negative stereotypes to grow, gain insight, and elevate their ability to thrive.

Sam recalls a time he went to a party that was predominantly attended by white

students. In his recounting of the story, he shared:

> Me and my friends… like three of us… we were the only Black people there, and
> we felt it… and white people just want to be around us and stuff like that. I told
> my brother that, and my brother was like, "Man, if you're Black at a white party,
> you're the coolest person in the room."

At this moment, Sam recognized the potential benefits of Blackness in a white world.

Recognizing that being a Black man is equated with coolness in this social setting

introduced Sam and his friends to a perspective on Blackness that they may have never

realized. Sam hints at this by sharing, "We've worked so hard to be put on that

pedestal… and it's like, it's not really that big of a deal." Sam used this experience to

crossover into a new space and gain a sense of self-awareness that he did not possess.

His suggestion, "it's not that big of a deal," equipped Sam with the ability to travel into

these other spaces and be successful without having to be self-conscious about his

sense of belonging (Harper, 2012). Where Sam has shared an experience that details a

cross-over experience that seems to have created an opportunity for growth, Kyle

shared a story highlighting his experience navigating multiple identities and how to

capitalize on this understanding.

Kyle used "preconceived conceptions" of what it means to be "African American"

to his benefit. He realized that he could maximize opportunities to apply for grants and

scholarships by appealing to stereotypes others may have about him as a Black man.

To this end, Kyle shared,

> If you want Black, I can give you Black. I will write you a whole five letters about what it's like to be Black, but it's not true… it's not real. All I really want is your money because that's what you want to hear.

Kyle fully recognized the implications of the negative stereotypes and what it meant to use the "preconceived conceptions" associated with one of his identities to gain access to resources that would support and elevate his identity as a student. Kyle highlighted this understanding by saying, "sometimes I feel like I just want to be treated normal… to be a student, period… not just as an African American." He made it clear that he would rather not have to indulge others with his "struggles" and not always be concerned with others receiving him based on his "skin color." Although Kyle demonstrated a strong understanding of how to utilize crossover capital, it does not come without a cost. He named and articulated the oppression he experienced as a Black man through his educational pathway.

All participants of this study demonstrated the potential for self-awareness and growth in their pursuit of opportunity. They named their race and ethnicity as a form of oppression experienced by Black and Latino men college students within the community college. This sense of awareness resulted in their decision to take control of their narratives and maximize the crossover capital experience to meet their needs.

Discussions and Implications for Practice and Research

This study helped to create a better understanding of how undergraduate Black and Latino men students make meaning of spaces to understand their oppression and privilege as a part of their community college experiences. In using the crossover capital

framework (Salinas, 2015), this study situated the participants' lived experiences across multiple places and spaces, with each space having the potential to serve as a way to oppress and/or privilege the individual (Vasquez et al., 2020). The participants of this study understood that enrolling at a community college would give them opportunities to navigate new environments that would potentially privilege them in ways that their home environments would or could not. As students enrolled and engaged in a community college – a new environment - they understood that education would give them access to capital in the form of resources. For example, Kyle stated that earning a community college degree was his "only way out of poverty." Beyond opportunities to escape poverty, students saw their community as a way to find a deeper meaning for themselves and their lives. Trey said, "I had been told that college has been a place for people that considered you as human beings and saw that they tried to look into your potential and see where you could help society."

The crossover capital framework allows research to unpack the humanizing nuances of multiple identities among people. While the crossover capital framework helps individuals to understand "the rewarding and challenging experiences of the [individuals]… while navigating and learning different settings, customs, and cultures in order to access new landing spaces" (Salinas, 2015, p. 121) other theoretical framings of capital (i.e., Yosso, 2005; Rendón et al., 2014) only focus on the existence of students' sociocultural identities (Vasquez et al., 2020). To this end, many of the students made the distinction between resources and opportunities available in higher education that were inaccessible at home, a landing space that they can return to if they choose. This form of understanding reflects when the students made conscious choices

to cross intellectual, emotional, and geographical borders to interact with different communities (Salinas, 2015; Vasquez et al., 2020).

As an implication for practice, community colleges need to create a culture of inclusion, where the past experiences of Black and Latino men students are normalized and integrated as a part of their educational experience. A commitment to the success of Black and Latino men requires institutions to acknowledge and understand these students' lived experiences and the time and effort they spend managing stereotypes within their respective institutional environments. Doing so would allow Black and Latino men to embrace their campus community as a reliable opportunity to escape their home life, gain access to resources and develop skills that will benefit their long-term financial and social success (Harper, 2012, Harris & Wood, 2013).

To accomplish this, community colleges must adopt an equity agenda that addresses the curriculum, student success initiatives, campus climate, and the development of faculty and staff needed to implement this agenda. Institutions must make it a priority to develop, facilitate and/or provide access to professional development that equips faculty, practitioners, and administrators with the skills and awareness related to the barriers facing Black and Latino undergraduate men students (Felix et al., 2015). An increase in awareness will allow faculty, staff, and administrators to consider the development of formal protocols – centered on double-loop learning – that will help to examine practices and procedures that will benefit the success of Black and Latino men students (Felix & Gonzalez, 2022). If done purposefully, a welcoming institutional environment will emerge for Black and Latino men college students in inclusive landing spaces.

All participants of this study described how they adapted their behavior to navigate their environments at home and the community college. They recognized their obligations centered in inter-landing spaces (e.g., communities of people, family, and peers) and/or the expectations of their intra-landing spaces (e.g., places and environments) to navigate landing spaces through an identity lens. These expectations created a sense of oppression in spaces that the participants have historically equated with privilege, opportunity, and/or safety. For example, Greg shared his inter- and intra-landing spaces experience when stating:

> I feel like I live in a world where I have to please two groups of people. I feel I do have to please my fellow Blacks, and I feel like I have to please white people. The whites will never be satisfied with what I do or say, and the Blacks probably [will not] either.

Through the process of crossing inter- and intra-landing spaces, individuals make the crossover from one landing space to another landing space and might negotiate social identities that perform and/or lose and gain oppression and privilege through their interactions with "new cultures, environments, spaces, and ideas through every interaction with communities of people, places, and things" (Salinas, 2015, p. 121). Further research is necessary to continue to understand how Black and Latino men college students transfer knowledge between a community college and their communities, with each space having the potential to oppress and/or privilege the individual.

Black and Latino men college students experience stereotype threats in multiple spaces (Steele, 1997). As evidenced by the example shared by Greg, stereotypes in the form of microaggressions and overt discrimination lead to a sense of hyperawareness amongst Black and Latino undergraduate men students (Camacho et al., 2021),

whether at home or community college. Therefore, community colleges must create safe landing spaces for undergraduate Black and Latino men students to share their intersectional identities – informed by cultural norms and values – in a way that provides for self-expression, support, and validation. Such landing spaces can be created and facilitated via one-on-one advising and/or group programming (e.g., men of color support groups and culturally informed advising and instruction).

Another implication for practice is based on the ability of community colleges to actively engage Black and Latino men students in curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities to advance their academic success. Black and Latino men enroll at community colleges to access resources and create opportunities to advance their personal and professional goals. Community colleges must provide funding for programming and student success initiatives that advance and support the needs of Black and Latino men (Abrica & Martinez, 2016; Salinas & Hidrowoh, 2018). Community colleges can identify or advocate for state and federal funding and grant programs that would support the expenditures of these programs, including the necessary professional development for staff and faculty.

Staff and faculty members can be equipped with knowledge and skills that maximize opportunities to support Black and Latino men across all areas of the campus (Camacho et al., 2021). This approach would allow all staff and faculty members to approach their work from a place of informed mentorship. If community colleges adopt a point of service centered on mentorship, students will benefit from the opportunity to be engaged by multiple mentorship opportunities (Elliott et al., 2018). This communal approach to support will help to alleviate the challenges that Black and Latino men

students have with asking for help and will enhance their ability to persist and complete (Harris & Wood, 2013; Sáenz et al., 2013). This work can be achieved through an enhanced onboarding and/or professional development series. To further the development of this type of programming, research is necessary to unpack and understand factors that positively impact faculty and students, and staff and students' mentorship relationships (Elliott et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2019). In addition to formal staff and faculty onboarding, community colleges should also support the implementation of peer mentorship-based programs for Black and Latino undergraduate men students.

Colleges and universities can create a sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2018) through positive relationships for undergraduate Black and Latino men students via the development of peer mentorship programs staffed by Black and Latino peer mentors, who would be compensated for their time and labor. Camacho (2021) suggested that a compensation policy, supported by relevant assessment and evaluation tools, helps to create buy-in amongst students. In lieu of dedicated institutional funding, the peer mentor role can be financially supported through federal work-study dollars. The safe landing space created by the peer mentor relationships can help Black and Latino undergraduate men students navigate from one space to another.

Through the process of crossing from one space to another, individuals can adapt to places, situations, and environments using their social identities (race, ethnicity, gender) to gain access to assets provided by a given space/environment. The participants of this study made decisions about their growth and development through a sense of self-, double-, or triple-consciousness (Flores & Román, 2009) they discovered

while navigating between multiple inter- and intra- landing spaces (Cuellar & Salinas, 2022). These choices reflected the interactions and opportunities in the community college and how they would most benefit from their participation. Given the current political climate of rejecting conversations that are intersectional, scholars and practitioners must advance research and practices regarding the implications of inter and/or intra-landing spaces about self-, double-, and triple-consciousness. For example, Black and Latino men are often stereotyped and engaged by a singular understanding of their various social identities. However, a space needs to be created where these students can make conscious choices about how they want to present themselves and engage with others, particularly within their community college landing spaces.

Conclusion

The narratives shared by the participants in this study convey a common experience. All participants of this study identified a shared desire to utilize their community college experience and the completion of a degree as a means to create a bridge to their future success. The findings of this study offer clear evidence that Black and Latino men community college students are actively working to overcome the oppression they experience in their home environments and to take advantage of the privileges they are afforded through the navigation of the educational landing spaces that are available to them. In recognizing, and actively supporting, the sense of self-awareness, personal responsibility, and desire for success demonstrated by the participants in this study, scholars, practitioners, and administrators must have a clear path forward for working toward increasing the rates of Black and Latino men community college students.

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