

ASSESSING THE COMMUNITY READINESS OF A LATINA/O CAMPUS COMMUNITY
TO ADDRESS LESBIAN, GAY, AND BISEXUAL CONCERNS

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Research on the campus climate for lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals evidences that heterosexism at institutions of higher education is still prevalent. Although campus climate research is increasing, studies have been primarily conducted with European American samples. Sexual orientation issues within ethnic minority campus communities have remained largely unexplored. The current study is the first to examine the readiness of a Latina/o community at a major Midwestern State University to address LGB concerns. Using the Community Readiness Model (CRM), data were collected through individual interviews with 16 key informants from programs and organizations serving the Latina/o campus community. The Community Readiness Assessment scoring procedure was used to analyze the interview data. Findings suggest that the community is at a vague awareness readiness stage to address LGB issues. Culturally sensitive recommendations for stage-appropriate strategies to improve the Latina/o campus community's readiness are presented.

To my husband, daughter, and son for being understanding and supportive when I needed to sacrifice our time together. To my father, mother, brother, and sister for believing in me and giving me the inspiration to dedicate my time and energy to promote awareness and inclusiveness of Latina/o LGB concerns. To all with love!

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
CHAPTER 3: METHOD.....	41
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	51
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	64
CHAPTER 6: TABLES.....	74
REFERENCES.....	77
APPENDIX A: SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC FORM.....	83

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Institutions of higher education, as means of knowledge production, are spaces for critical thinking where individuals are introduced to new ideas that may challenge their traditional views and stereotypes to promote a more inclusive and just society (Dugan & Yurman, 2011; Rankin, 2003; Rankin & Reason, 2008; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010; Renn, 2010; Yost & Gilmore, 2011). These institutions have the potential to serve as an arena in which to challenge discrimination against lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals. Although research examining the experiences of LGB individuals on campus is limited compared to research on other diversity groups (Dugan & Yurman, 2011), studies have documented that prejudice and discrimination against LGB individuals are serious and often neglected issues at institutions of higher education across the U.S. (D'Augelli, 1989; Herek, 1993; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010; Renn, 2010). LGB individuals are likely targets of discrimination on campus and the institutional climate is likely heterosexist and homophobic (Brown, Clarke, & Gortmaker, 2004; Brown, Happold, Clarke, Gortmaker, & Robinson-Keilig, 2002; Dugan & Yurman, 2011; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010). Despite this empirical evidence, only 4% of higher education institutions in the U.S. have made efforts to address LGB concerns at their campuses (LGBT Campus.org, 2012). Therefore, in the current study I assessed the level of readiness of a specific community to address LGB concerns in their programming efforts at a major Midwestern State University.

Assessing the campus climate for LGB individuals is a necessary step towards addressing issues of prejudice and discrimination within university settings (Herek, 1993; Rankin & Reason, 2008; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010; Renn, 2010; Yost & Gilmore, 2011).

Such assessment can inform the development of interventions geared towards promoting a more welcoming and safe environment for LGB individuals on campus. Campus climate refers to the attitudes, behaviors, and standards or practices of employees and students regarding underrepresented communities such as LGB individuals on campus (Rankin & Reason, 2008). Inherent is the idea of promoting an inclusive campus climate where members of all groups (represented and underrepresented) can have their needs, abilities, and potential met. Campus climate research has often examined the climate for LGB individuals at institutional (e.g., Rankin et al., 2010), interpersonal (attitudes towards LGB individuals; e.g., Yost & Gilmore, 2011), and personal (experiences of LGB individuals; e.g., Fine, 2010) levels. Findings from these studies highlight the need to address LGB concerns on campuses across the U.S. Otherwise, the invisibility and lack of attention to LGB issues reinforces the stereotypes from which LGB prejudice and discrimination are socially legitimized, as well as the psychological implications that such prejudice and discrimination has on LGB individuals (Rankin, 2003; Rankin & Reason, 2008; Rankin et al., 2010; Toro-Alfonso, Borrero Bracero, & Nieves Lugo, 2008; Zea, Reisen, & Poppen, 1999).

Several recommendations have been made to improve the campus climate for LGB individuals; however, these recommendations are sometimes generic, which may compromise the success of intervention and programming efforts. Another limitation of LGB campus climate research is that it has been conducted primarily with European American (EA) students, staff, faculty, and/or administrators (e.g., Brown et al., 2004; Fine, 2011; Yost & Gilmore, 2011). When ethnic minorities (EM) are included they are often compared to EA, and EM sub-groups are not distinguished (e.g., Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010), failing to address the particularities of different ethnic groups. This limits the potential influence of

interventions by not being specific and sensitive to the particular context of different ethnic groups in regards to LGB concerns. In an attempt to bridge this gap, I used the Community Readiness Model (CRM; Plested, Edwards, & Jumper-Thurman, 2006) to assess the readiness of a Latina/o community to address LGB issues at a major Midwestern State University in order to make recommendations for improving the climate based on the community's level of readiness.

Community Readiness Model

The CRM is a model for promoting community change by assessing the readiness of a given community to address a problem and then making recommendations for change strategies consistent with the stage of readiness (Edwards, Jumper-Thurman, Plested, Oetting, & Swanson, 2000; Jumper-Thurman, Edwards, Plested, & Oetting, 2003; Plested et al., 2006; Plested, Jumper Thurman, Edwards, & Oetting, 1998). Readiness is defined as the level of preparedness of a community to advocate for and take action on an issue (Edwards et al., 2000; Jumper-Thurman et al., 2003). Unless a community is ready to address a certain issue (e.g., LGB prejudice and discrimination), efforts will be unsuccessful and change is unlikely to occur.

Grounding interventions on the level of readiness of the Latina/o campus community to address LGB issues will likely enhance the probability of success of related efforts. The CRM takes into account the resources, culture, and context of the community to assess readiness and recommend changes, while nurturing collaboration between individuals and the institutions. Assessing the readiness level will ensure that efforts are sensitive and geared towards where the community stands (Plested et al., 1998).

The CRM has been used to assess a variety of social issues (e.g., intimate partner violence and preventive health behaviors) with diverse ethnic groups. Only a handful of studies have used the CRM to address LGB concerns (e.g., Carlson & Harper, 2008; Social Science

Research Laboratory, 2009). To my knowledge, there is no published research using the CRM to assess a campus community's readiness to address LGB concerns. Such research is critical if colleges and universities are committed to promoting a safe and inclusive environment for all members of their campus community. Therefore, it was important to assess the readiness of the Latina/o campus community to make change and advocate for LGB individuals in order to make recommendations for the development of programs consistent with the community's level of readiness. In the following section I provide an overview of the challenges of Latina/o college students and a discussion of LGB concerns within the Latina/o population to facilitate a better understanding of the importance of examining this specific campus community.

Latinas/os in Context

Latinas/os are the largest ethnic minority group in the U.S., representing 16% of the population (Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). However, they continue to be underrepresented at institutions of higher education, with only 13% of Latinas/os having attained a bachelor's degree (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Despite this documented disparity, few institutional efforts have been implemented to better serve the needs of Latina/o college students, limiting the effectiveness of recruitment and retention efforts, resulting in low graduation rates (Piedra, Schiffner, & Reynaga-Abiko, 2011). Institutional programs that promote the attainment of higher education degrees are critical in an effort to decrease the educational gap experienced by Latina/o students (Piedra et al., 2011). This educational gap may be compounded for Latina/o LGB individuals, given that they are likely to experience various layers of oppression based on their race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender.

Culture organizes and defines sexuality and sexual orientation, shaping individuals' experiences of their sexuality and its development (González & Espín, 1996; Manalansan, 1996).

Very limited research is available examining LGB issues within the Latina/o population in the U.S. Religion, gender, and sexual roles have been found to influence the attitudes and behaviors that Latinas/os have in regards to diverse sexual orientations (Acosta, 2008; González & Espín, 1996; Gutmann, 2007; Herek & González-Rivera, 2006; Manalansan, 1996; Parker, 2008; Ramírez, 1999; Ramírez & García Toro, 2002). However, traditional understandings of gender and sexuality in Latin America have been challenged during the last decade with the increasing visibility of LGB concerns through the approval of legislations protecting the rights of LGB individuals. For instance, Argentina and Mexico City legalized same-sex marriage, and same-sex civil unions were legalized in Colombia, Ecuador, and Uruguay, and in some states of Brazil and Mexico (Barrionuevo, 2010; Warren, 2010). The increasing openness of Latin American countries to address LGB issues provides a context for Latinas/os beliefs and cultural norms when they immigrate to the U.S. Upon arrival to the U.S., Latina/o immigrants are likely to experience the dichotomies of power/powerlessness and assimilation/cultural resistance, which may be enhanced in the experiences of Latina/o LGB individuals (Acosta, 2008; González & Espín, 1996; Manalansan, 1996). For Latinas/os in higher education, I argue that a similar dynamic happens where the experiences of discrimination of Latina/o LGB individuals on campus are compounded by their sexual orientation as another source of oppression.

Experiencing discrimination at multiple levels may lead to increased psychological distress, particularly in the context of higher education where Latina/o LGB individuals may expect people to be more open and likely to provide support. This in turn, may result in higher levels of student drop out, endangering the educational pipeline for Latinas/os even more. Therefore, understanding the psychological implications of discrimination for Latina/o LGB

individuals, is a first step to develop institutional efforts aimed at meeting their needs and ensure their wellbeing and academic success.

Purpose and Rationale

As stated previously, LGB campus climate research with EM groups is limited. When EM are included it is often for the purpose of making EM vs. EA comparisons (e.g., Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010). This is problematic because different ethnic minority groups share minority status but experience different socio-historical backgrounds. I believe that grouping them into a single category neglects these differences. In order to account for the particularities of different ethnic minority groups and to avoid pan-ethnic approaches, I focused in the Latina/o community at a Midwestern State University given that they are the largest ethnic minority group in the country (Ennis et al., 2011), and a largely underrepresented group in higher education (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Literature has suggested that Latina/o individuals in the U.S. are likely to hold negative attitudes towards LGB individuals (González & Espín, 1996; Herek & González-Rivera, 2006; Muñoz-Laboy et al., 2009), however, little empirical research is available examining their readiness for improving those attitudes. Therefore, in the current study I used the CRM to assess the readiness to address LGB issues within the Latina/o campus community. Based on this assessment, I recommend strategies that can improve negative attitudes towards LGB individuals, as well as the climate within this specific community based on their level of readiness for change.

Implications

This study provided the unique opportunity to examine the intersection of two socially oppressed groups in terms of ethnicity and sexual orientation and gave light to the inherent complexities of their intersection. EM-LGB individuals often experience the burden of having a

part of who they are oppress another part of their identity (Acosta, 2008; Evans & D'Augelli, 1996; González & Espín, 1996; Gooden-Cross & Tagler, 2011; Manalansan, 1996; Muñoz-Laboy et al., 2009; Savin-Williams, 1996). For instance, they may find support in coping with racism within their EM community (e.g., Acosta, 2008; Gooden-Cross & Tagler, 2011) and with heterosexism within the LGB community. Simultaneously, they are likely to experience heterosexism and homophobia within their EM community (see Acosta, 2008; Gooden-Cross & Tagler, 2011; Herek & González-Rivera, 2006; Muñoz-Laboy et al., 2009) and racism within their LGB community (see Gooden-Cross & Tagler, 2011; Muñoz-Laboy et al., 2009; Rankin et al., 2010). Therefore, EM-LGB people often feel that they have to choose one identity over the other in order to cope with the oppression and discrimination they experience (Evans & D'Augelli, 1996; Gooden-Cross & Tagler, 2011; Manalansan, 1996; Muñoz-Laboy et al., 2009; Savin-Williams, 1996). Assessing the readiness of the Latina/o campus community was the first step working towards ameliorating the experiences of discrimination of Latina/o LGB, and creating a space to find support in dealing with both types of oppression. This approach can be modeled with other EM groups to promote visibility and inclusiveness of diverse sexual orientations within their groups. Additionally, primarily EA-LGB communities can use this model to assess racial dynamics that may be prevalent.

More broadly, this study can inform the development of interventions at institutions of higher education that can potentially challenge the prejudice and discrimination toward LGB individuals that has been widely documented in the literature (D'Augelli, 1989; Fine, 2011; Herek, 1993; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010; Yost & Gilmore, 2011). In addition, this study contributes towards expanding the scope of the CRM by using it to promote inclusiveness and cultural competence on LGB EM concerns.

Research Questions

In order to assess the Latina/o campus community's readiness to address LGB issues, I sought to answer the following four research questions: (a) What is the climate for LGB individuals within the campus Latina/o community?, (b) How ready is the Latina/o community on campus to implement interventions addressing LGB concerns and promoting a welcoming environment within their community?, (c) What efforts have been made within the Latina/o community to address issues of LGB prejudice and discrimination? What has been the response of the community towards those efforts?, and (d) How can the Latina/o community on campus address more effectively LGB issues and concerns in a way that is consistent with their level of readiness and cultural context?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Institutions of higher education are committed to promoting a safe environment for all members in their community (Fine, 2011; Rankin et al., 2010; Renn, 2010). Therefore, it is critical to assess the campus climate for LGB individuals and how colleges and universities promote an inclusive environment. Traditionally, LGB campus climate research has assessed the institutional climate (e.g., programming efforts and curricular design), attitudes that heterosexuals within the campus community hold towards LGB individuals, and LGB individuals' perceptions and experiences of discrimination.

Our knowledge of these issues is largely based on both university commissioned reports (e.g., Brown et al., 2002; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010) and published peer-reviewed surveys (e.g., Brown et al., 2004; D'Augelli, 1992; González Guzmán et al., 2007; Herek, 1993; Toro-Alfonso & Varas-Díaz, 2004; Yost & Gilmore, 2011) and/or individual interview studies (e.g., Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011; Fine, 2011; Toro-Alfonso, et al., 2008).

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research. First, the samples are not always comparable across studies. Some studies include only LGB students as participants (e.g., D'Augelli, 1992; Fine, 2011), whereas the rest collect data from students, faculty, and staff who self-identify as LGB or heterosexual. Second, this research utilizes primarily EA respondents from predominantly non-Latino White institutions. The little research that has been conducted with EM-LGB people has collapsed EM into a single "non White" category in comparison to EA (e.g., Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010). As a result, these studies lack depth in terms of the experiences particular to specific ethnic minority groups. Indeed, to my knowledge there is no published study specifically examining LGB campus climate with

Latina/o groups in the U.S. Therefore, my literature review will draw from peer-reviewed survey and/or interview research with Puerto Rican (e.g., González Guzmán et al., 2007; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008; Toro-Alfonso & Varas-Díaz, 2004) and African American (e.g., Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011) participants. The third limitation to keep in mind is the fact that some of the studies that I discuss in this chapter assessed only universities that have programming inclusive of LGB issues, which may positively impact the reported institutional climate, attitudes, and the experiences of LGB individuals in these campuses (i.e., Brown et al., 2002; Brown et al., 2004; Rankin 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Yost & Gilmore, 2011). Only a handful of studies reported national findings (see Rankin et al., 2010; Stotzer, 2010).

I organized the literature in this chapter based on the three campus climate factors commonly studied (i.e., institutional climate, attitudes towards LGB individuals, and LGB experiences), beginning with the discussion about the institutional climate. I also discuss related information specific to ethnic minority groups, and particularly to Latinas/os in Puerto Rico. Additionally, I present studies specific to the Midwestern State University context. Finally, I discuss the CRM (Plested et al., 2006) and how it has been used to assess the level of readiness for change across different communities and issues.

LGB Institutional Climate

The institutional campus climate influences the learning and quality of life of all campus members. LGB students, in particular, have been traditionally neglected because institutions of higher education have not been historically committed to promoting a safe environment for LGB individuals (D'Emilio, 1990; Renn, 2010). Given this history, only 4% of higher education institutions provide professional services specific to sexual orientation and gender identity issues, which may make it difficult for LGB students, faculty, staff, and administrators to feel safe and

be open about their sexual orientation (D'Emilio, 1990; Renn, 2010). Some universities have undertaken efforts to assess the campus climate in order to develop and implement programs addressing LGB concerns and promote a welcoming environment (LGBT Campus.org, 2012; Renn, 2010). Documenting the campus environment for LGB individuals is a critical first step for validating and promoting the need for such efforts. These efforts are consistent with the mission of institutions of higher education towards promoting a safe environment for all members of their community (Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010; Renn, 2010; Yost & Gilmore, 2011).

Unfortunately, studies continue to document a heterosexist institutional climate (Brown et al., 2004; Brown et al., 2002; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2010; Toro-Alfonso, et al., 2008). Through interview and survey data, a sample of faculty members ($n=19$) from a public university in Puerto Rico reported that prejudice and discrimination is prevalent on campus, referencing religious and gender aspects as contributing factors (Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008). Traditional religious and gender beliefs related to negative attitudes towards LGB individuals have also been found with primarily EA samples of students, faculty, and staff, describing same-sex attraction behaviors as immoral (see Yost & Gilmore, 2011). Interestingly, when asked about specific examples of prejudice and discrimination, faculty members in Puerto Rico were unable to identify a particular incident. However, in their responses they reported witnessing jest and derogatory remarks (e.g., see also Brown et al., 2002; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010; Yost & Gilmore, 2011) that were not identified as prejudice or discrimination. This suggests an institutional climate of invisibility and silence, as well as limited awareness and sensitivity of LGB issues (Toro-Alfonso, et al., 2008).

Moreover, LGB students ($n=113$) in the same study perceived that their campus was not supportive and did not provide sufficient visibility for LGB concerns (Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008). This finding is consistent with studies across U.S. colleges and universities, suggesting that LGB individuals tend to have a negative perception of the climate in comparison with their heterosexual counterparts (Rankin et al., 2010). This finding was reported even at institutions where efforts have been made to address LGB concerns (Brown et al., 2002; Brown et al., 2004; Rankin et al., 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Yost & Gilmore, 2011). For example, findings from a survey given to students ($n=562$), faculty ($n=90$), and staff ($n=184$) at an institution known to support LGB concerns, indicated that LGB students and staff perceived the environment for LGB individuals as less positive than their heterosexual counterparts (Yost & Gilmore, 2011). In this study, faculty and staff generally perceived the climate as positive, whereas students were more likely to perceive the climate as neutral. In contrast, a study with a national sample of colleges and universities reported that LGB faculty were more likely to perceive the climate as negative (e.g., feeling uncomfortable with the overall campus climate or at their department) than LGB students and staff (Rankin et al., 2010). Moreover, compared to EA-LGB, EM-LGB people are less likely to perceive a positive campus climate given their experienced dual discrimination (Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010). Similarly, women were also more likely to report a less positive climate for LGB individuals than men (Rankin et al., 2006). Clearly, campus climate is perceived by many people to be negative, especially when comparing minority groups to their majority counterparts.

The lack of policy institutionally supporting LGB issues allows a climate of prejudice and discrimination (Rankin, 2003; Stotzer, 2010; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008). Including sexual orientation in non-discrimination policies may encourage LGB individuals to seek help and

report incidents of discrimination (D'Augelli, 1989, Herek, 1993; Stotzer, 2010). In fact, it has been documented that LGB students are likely to underreport anti-LGB acts due to fear of negative consequences, such as further harassment or suspecting that nothing would have been done (D'Augelli, 1989, 1992; Evans & D'Augelli; 1996; Herek, 1993; Rankin et al, 2010; Stotzer, 2010). Stotzer (2010) examined a database she created that included FBI hate crimes statistics at colleges and universities in the U.S. from 1998-2007, in addition to three policy-related variables: (a) whether the state in which the university is based had hate crime state laws protecting LGB individuals, (b) whether the state had mandatory law enforcement training about these policies, and (c) whether the university had an antidiscrimination policy protecting LGB individuals. The database included a total of 418 universities from 45 states. She found that universities with both campus and state (with mandated law enforcement training) policies protecting LGB individuals reported a higher number of hate crime reports than those that did not have such policies. Thus, LGB individuals seem to be more likely to report incidents of discrimination when they are legally protected, and may be less likely to do so when their institutional protection is not guaranteed (see also D'Augelli, 1989; Evans & D'Augelli, 1996; Herek, 1993; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2010).

Therefore, it is imperative that law officials receive proper training and that policy protections at the state and campus levels are publicly stated to ensure that the campus community knows of their existence. In fact, in a study of 14 universities that have a rapid response system for incidents of LGB discrimination, it was found that students, faculty, and staff were largely unaware of this reporting system (Rankin, 2003). Another study found that of the nineteen faculty members interviewed only two were aware of policies protecting the rights of LGB individuals on campus (Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008).

In sum, the main findings from these studies suggest that LGB prejudice and discrimination (e.g., jest and derogatory remarks) on campus is prevalent, particularly due to religious and gender beliefs (Toro-Alfonso, et al., 2008; Yost & Gilmore, 2011). LGB individuals were more likely than their heterosexual counterpart to report the campus climate more negatively and as unsupportive of their concerns (Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010). Finally, LGB individuals are unlikely to report incidents of prejudice and discrimination, particularly when their protection is not institutionally guaranteed (D'Augelli, 1989, 1992; Evans & D'Augelli, 1996; Herek, 1993; Rankin et al., 2010; Stotzer, 2010). This suggests a climate of invisibility and silence in addition to limited awareness and sensitivity of LGB concerns from campus members and officials.

In assessing the campus climate, it is critical to examine the ability and investment of the administration in responding to reported and documented discrimination, as well as in meeting the needs of LGB students, faculty, and staff (Evans & D'Augelli, 1996; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2010; Renn, 2010). Campus climate studies have recommended that administrators (a) include sexual orientation in non-discrimination policies (b) have active LGB organizations and/or task force, (c) provide a space where LGB individuals and allies can consistently meet (e.g., LGBT Resource Center), (d) develop outreach programming addressing LGB concerns, (e) include LGB issues in the curriculum and research endeavors, and (f) create an LGB studies program (D'Augelli, 1989, D'Augelli & Rose, 1990, Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010; Stotzer, 2010; Yost & Gilmore, 2011). Implementing these recommendations is critical in order to validate the experiences of LGB individuals and ameliorate the psychological sequelae (e.g., fear of being victimized) of the discrimination they often face.

Universities' failure to implement the aforementioned recommendations promotes physical and academic invisibility, as well as lack of acknowledgement of LGB individuals and their contributions to the campus community. This invisibility and omission reinforces the stereotypes from which discrimination is legitimized (Brown et al., 2002; Rankin, 2003). In contrast, by openly addressing LGB concerns within the campus community, the institution is openly showing support for LGB individuals and simultaneously challenging negative attitudes (Evans & D'Augelli, 1996; Rankin 2003; Yost & Gilmore, 2011).

The reported heterosexist climate at institutions of higher education shed light on the importance of understanding and changing the negative attitudes towards LGB individuals on campus. In the following section, I discuss studies that examined the attitudes towards LGB individuals in campus settings. I also discuss related studies conducted in Puerto Rico that may provide an idea of the climate within a Latina/o community, which is the target of the current study.

Attitudes toward LGB Individuals

Negative attitudes towards LGB individuals have been evidenced in campus climate research and may contribute to incidents of discrimination where LGB individuals are victimized (D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Evans & D'Augelli, 1996; González Guzmán et al., 2007; Herek, 1993; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008; Toro-Alfonso & Varas-Díaz, 2004). Some of the reported negative attitudes across the different studies included (a) believing that the university would be a better place if there were no LGB individuals (D'Augelli & Rose, 1990), (b) being indifferent to the problems that LGB individuals face (Yost & Gilmore, 2011), (c) being uninterested in learning more about LGB individuals (Brown et al., 2002), (d) wishing to keep legal penalties criminalizing LGB individuals (D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; González

Guzmán et al., 2007), (e) feeling disappointed to find out that her/his daughter/son was lesbian or gay (González Guzmán et al., 2007), (f) feeling uncomfortable seeing two men walking together holding hands (González Guzmán et al., 2007), and (g) preferring to be acquaintances, rather than friends, with LGB people (González Guzmán et al., 2007). Moreover, many participants reported having heard derogatory remarks about LGB individuals on campus (Brown et al., 2002; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; González Guzmán et al., 2007; Rankin et al., 2010; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008; Yost & Gilmore, 2011).

Attitudinal patterns seem to vary according to participants' characteristics and the target sexual minority (Brown et al., 2002; Brown et al., 2004; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; González Guzmán et al., 2007; Toro-Alfonso & Varas-Díaz, 2004; Yost & Gilmore, 2011). Specifically, gender, college affiliation, university role, sexual orientation, and knowing an LGB individual were identified as related to participants' LGB attitudes, prejudice, and social distance (Brown et al., 2002; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; González Guzmán et al., 2007; Toro-Alfonso & Varas-Díaz, 2004; Yost & Gilmore, 2011). These factors will be discussed next.

Regarding gender, male students were found to have more negative attitudes towards LGB individuals compared to their female counterparts (Brown et al., 2002; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Toro-Alfonso & Varas-Díaz, 2004; Yost & Gilmore, 2011). Based on a sample of college students ($n=548$) from a public university in Puerto Rico, Toro-Alfonso and Varas-Díaz (2004) found that men reported higher levels of sexual prejudice towards LGB individuals compared to women. This is consistent with studies with primarily EA participants (Brown et al., 2002; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Herek, 2002). Men also reported higher levels of social distance from gay men compared to women, but there were no significant gender differences in terms of social distance towards lesbians (Toro-Alfonso & Varas-Díaz, 2004).

College affiliation has also been linked to reported levels of prejudice and social distance in Puerto Rico (González Guzmán et al., 2007; Toro-Alfonso & Varas-Díaz, 2004) and the U.S. (Brown et al., 2004). Students from the Social Sciences reported lower levels of prejudice compared to students in the Natural Sciences (Toro-Alfonso & Varas-Díaz, 2004). In another study, a sample of graduate students in Public Health and Health Education ($n=92$) had high levels of sexual prejudice (González Guzmán et al., 2007). This may be related to the limited level of exposure to discussing LGB concerns in these colleges. In fact, González Guzmán and colleagues (2007) found that students who have had any type of training or education about LGB issues were more likely to report lower levels of social distance, compared to those without such exposure.

University role was another important factor related to participants' attitudes, prejudice, and social distance. In contrast to students, faculty and staff have been found to be likely more supportive of LGB issues and report low levels of prejudice and social distance (Brown et al., 2002; Brown et al., 2004; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008; Yost & Gilmore, 2011). A study that surveyed the level of sexual prejudice among students, faculty, and staff found that the majority reported low levels of sexual prejudice; however, faculty and staff reported lower levels than students (Yost & Gilmore, 2011). College students in Puerto Rico reported moderate to high levels of sexual prejudice and social distance (González Guzmán et al., 2007; Toro-Alfonso & Varas-Díaz, 2004), whereas faculty members reported low levels of prejudice and social distance (Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008). In a survey study with a sample of students ($n=254$), staff ($n=41$), and faculty ($n=148$), Brown and colleagues (2002) found that staff participants were more interested in improving the campus climate for LGB individuals and/or learning about LGB issues more so than faculty and students (especially students).

Sexual orientation and knowing an LGB individual were also related to participants' attitudes. For example, Yost and Gilmore (2011) found that LGB self-identified students and staff reported lower levels of LGB prejudice, compared to their heterosexual counterparts. Individuals who reported knowing a person who self-identifies as LGB also reported less negative attitudes and social distance, more positive opinions, and greater interest in LGB issues, than those who did not know someone who self-identifies as LGB (Brown et al., 2002; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Toro-Alfonso & Varas-Díaz, 2004).

The reported attitudes towards LGB individuals are likely to influence the experiences of LGB individuals on campus. In the following section, I discuss the experiences of discrimination reported by LGB individuals at different campus settings.

Experiences of LGB Individuals

For the past two decades, research has established that many LGB students, faculty, and staff find their campuses to be unwelcoming and unsafe environments due to the prevailing heterosexist institutional climate and the negative attitudes that some heterosexuals hold towards them (Brown et al., 2004; D'Augelli, 1989, 1992; Fine, 2011; Herek, 1993; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2010; Renn, 2010; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008). Indeed, LGB individuals are likely to experience discrimination or know of someone who experienced some form of discrimination based on their presumed sexual orientation (Brown et al., 2002; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008).

Although research on LGB issues has increasingly gained attention, a dearth of information is available regarding the experiences of EM-LGB individuals (see Zea, Jernewall, & Toro-Alfonso, 2003). Conceptual literature suggests that EM-LGB individuals may be likely to experience a double burden (or triple burden for women and transgender individuals) given

their minority status in terms of their sexual orientation and their race/ethnicity (Evans & D'Augelli, 1996; González & Espín 1996; Manalansan, 1996; Savin-Williams, 1996). As multiple minorities, EM-LGB people are likely to experience isolation and marginalization at predominantly EA institutions (Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011). In fact, campus climate research suggests that in addition to experiencing discrimination based on their sexual orientation, EM-LGB individuals also report low satisfaction with the racial climate on campus (Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010). Consequently, EM-LGB students often struggle with finding inclusive and affirming spaces on campus. This limited access to inclusive spaces may negatively influence their likelihood of having a strong support system and succeeding academically. Given the complexity surrounding their intersecting identities, I examine the experiences of EM-LGB people, particularly Latinas/os when the information is available.

Toro-Alfonso and colleagues (2008) conducted a survey study at a public university in Puerto Rico where they examined the level of exclusion and discrimination experienced by LGB college students ($n= 120$). Almost half of the LGB students reported that another peer discriminated towards them for being perceived as LGB (see also Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010). LGB students who did not experience discrimination themselves, reported witnessing instances of discrimination, consistent with other studies with EM-LGB individuals (e.g., Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010) and EA-LBG (e.g., Brown et al., 2002; Brown et al., 2004; Herek, 1993). Many LGB students reported feeling afraid to participate in class because they feared being perceived as LGB, and consequently harassed. This limited participation and uncomfortable feeling in class was also consistent with findings of survey studies comparing the

experiences of EM-LGB and EA-LGB, where the former were more likely to feel uncomfortable in class than the latter (Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010). Nonetheless, LGB students in Puerto Rico reported a moderate perception of exclusion based on their sexual orientation (Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008). Institutions of higher education in Puerto Rico have been resistant to making changes promoting acceptance of diversity, particularly in regards to sexual orientation. This, in turn, influences the experiences of LGB college students.

Rankin and colleagues (2006) conducted a campus climate assessment at the Midwestern State University where the current study with the Latina/o campus community was based. She and her colleagues surveyed a sample of college students ($n= 3,595$), out of which 18% ($n= 644$) self-identified as ethnic minority. Fourteen percent ($n= 92$) of ethnic minority students self-identified as LGB, 4% ($n= 26$) reported being uncertain about their sexual orientation, and 79% ($n=507$) self-identified as heterosexual. Both EM and EA LGB participants reported a great likelihood of experiencing discrimination based on their presumed sexual orientation; however, EM-LGB reported more incidences of discrimination, which is consistent with similar comparative studies at other campuses (see also Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2010).

Major findings from the studies discussed above suggest that LGB individuals are likely to experience or witness LGB discrimination and students are more likely to be the perpetrators (Brown et al., 2002; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008). EM-LGB individuals reported more incidents of discrimination than their EA counterpart (Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010). They also reported low levels of satisfaction with the campus climate, which they were likely to perceive as heterosexist and racist. Therefore, EM-LGB individuals were more likely than their EA counterpart to experience

an increased sense of isolation and marginalization (Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010).

In order to minimize their sense of isolation and avoid rejection from other EM students, who are often their primary support group at primarily EA universities, EM-LGB individuals may choose to not disclose their sexual orientation to other peers on campus. (Evans & D'Augelli, 1996; Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011; Rankin 2003; Rankin et al., 2010; Savin-Williams, 1996). In fact, in their nation-wide campus climate survey study, Rankin and colleagues (2010) reported that EM-LGB did not feel comfortable disclosing their sexual orientation in a predominantly heterosexual EA campus (see also Evans & D'Augelli, 1996; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006). EM-LGB individuals represented 24% ($n=1335$) of participants in this study and 20% ($n=276$) of them self-identified as Latina/o, however, the information was presented in aggregate form for all EM participants (Rankin et al., 2010). Moreover, the burden experienced by the heterosexist climate in the overall campus is also extended to their ethnic group, as EM-LGB individuals have reported feeling uncomfortable disclosing their sexual orientation within their ethnic campus community (Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010).

To better understand the experiences of EM-LGB individuals at a predominantly EA campus, I discuss some findings from an interview study of African American GB male college students ($n=8$). Participants indicated that their ethnic identity was more important than their sexual identity in building a social support system (Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011), which may contribute to EM-LGB students' greater likelihood to remain closeted. Moreover, participants in this study reported that being engaged in their ethnic community helped them better navigate the challenges they experience at a predominantly EA college. They explained that they were more

likely to find support within the predominantly heterosexual African American community, compared to the EA-LGB community. However, they also reported that the African American campus community tended to be less accepting of LGB individuals, compared to the larger campus community. Additionally, they were more likely to be discriminated based on their perceived sexual orientation by other African American men; whereas they often found support from women and LGB African American individuals on campus (Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011). This suggests the critical importance of examining the intersection between ethnicity/race and gender. Additionally, the saliency of their ethnic community support highlights how important it is for EM-LGB individuals to negotiate their decision to come out, in order to avoid losing ethnic community support.

EM-LGB individuals have consistently reported that they feel out of place and unsupported within the predominantly EA-LGB community (Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010). Therefore, they are likely to avoid LGB areas on campus because they feel these spaces do not address their particular needs (Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010). Moreover, both EM and EA LGB have described the campus climate as both homophobic and racist in comparative studies with EM and EA LGB (Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010).

The campus experiences of EM-LGB individuals seem to be very complex. They do not feel comfortable coming out as LGB in a predominantly EA university or within their ethnic group (Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010). EM-LGB reported that they are more likely to receive social support from their ethnic community than from the LGB campus community (Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011). Therefore,

many may choose their ethnic identity over their sexual identity and remain closeted as a way to receive the support they need to navigate the discrimination they experience in a predominantly EA university (Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011).

Common forms of discrimination reported by LGB individuals in previous studies include (a) derogatory remarks, (b) verbal insults, and (c) threats of physical violence (Brown et al., 2002; D'Augelli, 1989, 1992; Herek, 1993; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2010; Yost & Gilmore, 2011; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008). Written or visual expressions of anti-LGB prejudice (e.g., anti LGB graffiti) have also been documented (Rankin, 2003; Yost & Gilmore, 2011). Damaged property was also reported by few of the participants (Brown et al., 2002; D'Augelli, 1989, 1992; Herek, 1993), as well as experiencing being followed and thrown objects (D'Augelli, 1989, 1992; Herek, 1993). Moreover, it has been documented that students are commonly the perpetrators of LGB discrimination, and their usual targets are likely to be students as well (Brown et al., 2002; Herek, 1993; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2010; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008).

Some of the psychological implications of these experiences of discrimination for LGB students include fear, distrust, closeting, and/or minimization (Brown et al., 2002; D'Augelli, 1989, 1992; Fine, 2011; Herek, 1993; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2010). EM-LGB students report fearing for their personal and physical safety on campus more often than their EA-LGB counterparts (Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010). Fear for their personal and physical safety, as well as distrust in the institutional support, may also contribute to the closeting of sexual minority identities. For example, using data from a national sample of students ($n=3,247$), faculty ($n=498$), staff ($n=1,071$), and administrators ($n=333$), Rankin and colleagues (2010) found that LGB participants coped with the campus climate by (a) avoiding

places common to LGB individuals (see also Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011; Herek, 1993), (b) hiding their sexual orientation (see also Brown et al., 2002; Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011; Herek, 1993; Rankin, 2003), (c) disassociating from openly LGB individuals (see also Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011; Herek, 1993; Rankin 2003), and (d) considering leaving the campus. However, EM-LGB are more likely than their EA counterpart to engage in these coping strategies (see also Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006), potentially due to their dual minority status.

Besides the abovementioned coping strategies, LGB students who experience an anti-LGB climate are likely to minimize their experiences as a way to cope. For example, Fine (2011) interviewed 23 LGB students to learn how they conceptualized their experiences of prejudice and discrimination on campus. She found that LGB students minimized their personal experiences with prejudice by comparing their lives and their campuses to other times and places that they perceived to be worse. Further, openly LGB students in this study were likely to think of their sexual orientation as a “marginal” identity and tried to portray and engage in behaviors that they perceived to be more acceptable to heterosexual people (Fine, 2011).

Research suggests that LGB individuals on campus are likely to experience discrimination or know someone who has been discriminated. EM-LGB individuals are more likely to report incidents of discrimination based on their perceived sexual and/or ethnic identity (Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010). The experiences of discrimination reported by LGB individuals shed light on the importance of understanding and changing the heterosexist institutional climate and the negative attitudes towards LGB individuals on campus (Brown et al., 2002; Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011; Herek, 1993; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 2010; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008). Now

that I have discussed the campus climate research for LGB individuals, I will describe the specific context of the Midwestern State University that I studied.

Midwestern State University in Context

The Midwestern State University has specific characteristics that distinguish it from other campuses. Next, I discuss the general climate of the surrounding community in regards to LGB issues as a way to contextualize the experiences of LGB individuals at this campus.

Prejudice and discrimination towards LGB individuals has been documented to occur in the community where the Midwestern State University is located (Oswald & Culton, 2003; Oswald, Gebbie, & Culton, 2000). LGB individuals experience a wide range of discrimination from overhearing anti-LGB comments to more extreme forms of violence (e.g., physically harmed and/or vandalized property) and the perpetrators of discrimination are more likely to be strangers or people in their same status (e.g., co-workers, college students; Oswald et al., 2000). In addition, there is lack of consistent spaces in which LGB individuals can interact, thus minimizing the development and maintenance of formal LGB organizations. Without such organizations, LGB individuals are more likely to be unacknowledged by the community at large (Oswald & Culton, 2003; Oswald et al., 2000). Also, some LGB individuals feel that they live in a homophobic environment and others are angry that they cannot benefit from the same civil rights that heterosexual individuals can (Oswald & Culton, 2003; Oswald et al., 2000).

Nonetheless, LGB individuals also experience positive aspects of their LGB lives in the local community, such as religion/spirituality at LGB affirming congregations, positive and supportive relationships with family, partners, and/or friends, quality of life, and small and close LGB community (Oswald & Culton, 2003; Oswald et al., 2000). LGB individuals are active in seeking the support they need from these spaces. Moreover, some LGB individuals believe that

the Midwestern State University facilitates a relative welcoming environment because of the resources and support that the campus provides (Oswald & Culton, 2003).

Interestingly, LGB individuals in the local off-campus community do not feel recognized by the overall community and would like to change that (Oswald & Culton, 2003; Oswald et al., 2000). Therefore, studies aimed at making recommendations to begin such change are necessary to begin promoting inclusiveness in the local community. In doing so, it is important to examine the individual and institutional factors that nurture a sense of community support and safety for LGB individuals (Oswald & Culton, 2003). The present study focuses specifically on the Latina/o Midwestern State University's community to assess its readiness to address LGB issues and make recommendations for improvement based on where the community stands. This type of focused assessment in a university community is critical given that the local community does not have resources that could compensate for those lacking on campus.

Latina/o students comprised about 6% ($n = 2,555$) of the Midwestern State University student population in the Spring 2012, with 83% ($n = 2,123$) of them being undergraduate students, 13% ($n = 350$) graduate students, and 3% ($n = 82$) professionals (Illinois.edu, 2012a). Latina/o faculty represented 4.5% ($n = 114$; Illinois.edu, 2012b) and Latina/o academic professionals 2.9% ($n = 102$; Illinois.edu, 2012c). Statistics about sexual orientation are not available because such information has never been asked. However, in a campus-wide study assessing the LGB campus climate at the Midwestern State University in 2006, 14% ($n = 491$) of participants identified as LGB and 2% ($n = 85$) were uncertain about their sexual orientation (Rankin et al., 2006).

Through different programs, the Midwestern State University has implemented several interventions and efforts for improving the university climate for LGB individuals, which may

suggest the university's openness to addressing LGB issues. Two major programs that seek to promote a welcoming environment of campus are the "Allies Program" and "Sexual Orientation Resource Center (SORC)." Both programs co-sponsor LGB and Transgender Ally trainings at the Midwestern State University for graduate students, staff, and faculty. After participating in the Ally training, trainees are invited to be part of the Ally network, where they meet monthly during the academic year to discuss current LGBT issues and ways to advocate for LGBT rights. Curricular changes have also been made so that undergraduates can minor in LGBT/Queer studies.

These interventions do not seem to be sufficient, as incidents related to LGB discrimination often go unreported by the Midwestern State University officials. An example of this lack of visibility is a hate crime that occurred in April 2008 that was not reported campus wide despite the practice of campus wide reporting for other crimes (e.g., robbery and sexual assault). A Latino male student experienced and reported a hate crime that occurred late night on a Campus Street where an EA male student (presumably heterosexual) verbally insulted him and his companions for being perceived as LGB. After the victim responded verbally in defense, the aggressor attacked him and threw him on the floor (Evans, 2008). As a result of the incident and the lack of institutional support on campus, students organized, in collaboration with the Allies Program and SORC, to remember this day by showing affection with the Campus Street Hug-in event (Donegan, 2010).

Four years before this incident, Rankin and colleagues (2006) examined the LGB climate of the Midwestern State University. Most participants were uncertain that the University would take action to address reported incidents of LGB discrimination. The reported experiences and perceptions of LGB individuals at the Midwestern State University suggest that official

authorities have yet to recognize and acknowledge LGB individuals on campus, more effectively address LGB issues and concerns, and support LGB-affirming events more generally (beyond the two university-based LGB programs). In fact, in this assessment, the opinions were divided in terms of agreeing with the statement that the Midwestern State University addresses LGB issues. About half of participants perceived that the overall climate for LGB individuals at the Midwestern State University is improving (56%, $n = 1806$), friendly (50%, $n = 1632$), cooperative (48.8%, $n = 1578$), and respectful (48.8%, $n = 1574$). Nonetheless, participants reported that LGB issues were rarely discussed in their courses, they could not report if their academic requirements or their departments represented the contributions made by LGB individuals, and some did not believe that the Midwestern State University had visible LGB leadership (Rankin et al., 2006). These findings suggest the need for more concerted institutional LGB efforts that are widespread across the campus community.

Rankin and colleagues (2006) summarized some recommendations for improving the Midwestern State University climate for LGB individuals. These were (a) offering professional development programming to students, faculty, civil service staff, and other employees, (b) increasing resources for LGB staff, (c) supporting more events, programs, and organizations, outreach, and support groups, (d) having visible representation and action from the Midwestern State University officials, (e) including more LGB-related topics in curriculum and instruction, and (f) having more inclusive partner benefits plans.

Despite the fact that the Midwestern State University has implemented interventions addressing LGB concerns, these have not been widely adopted across campus communities and their impact has remained unexamined. In addition, given that ethnic minority students reported a greater burden of discrimination, it is critical to assess specific ethnic minority groups to better

understand their experiences. There is literature suggesting that unless a community is ready to deal with a given problem (e.g., heterosexism and homophobia), change is unlikely to occur or the likelihood of success may be low (Edwards et al., 2000). Therefore, I focused on one ethnic campus community, the Latina/o community in a predominantly EA campus, to assess its readiness to address LGB concerns. I also made recommendations for developing and implementing stage-appropriate strategies based on the Latina/o campus community's level of readiness for change, in order to promote a welcoming university environment for LGB individuals and work towards eradicating heterosexism and homophobia. In this effort, I used the CRM (Plested et al., 2006). Following is a discussion of some of the challenges Latina/o students may experience at institutions of higher education, as well as a discussion of LGB concerns within the Latina/o culture to provide a context for the experiences of Latina/o LGB individuals on campus.

Latinas/os in Context

In this section, I provide some background for understanding the experiences of Latina/o LGB individuals in the campus context. To my knowledge, there is no research available examining Latina/o LGB concerns at institutions of higher education in the U.S. Therefore, I divided this section in two parts. First, I present some of the available literature discussing the challenges experienced by Latina/o students in the context of higher education. Second, I present research in Latin America and the U.S. discussing cultural factors related to Latina/o LGB concerns.

Latinas/os in Higher Education

Latinas/os in the US represent 16% of the U.S. population (Ennis et al., 2011), however, they have low levels of college enrollment and bachelor's degree attainment (U.S. Census

Bureau 2010), which increases the need to better serve this population (Piedra et al., 2011). Despite this population increase, little efforts have been done to meet the needs of Latina/o college students who are likely to experience challenges that limit their recruitment, retention, and graduation rates. The challenges that Latina/o college students experience are the result of “accumulated disadvantage” (Schneider et al., 2006, p. 179). Piedra and colleagues (2011) summarized several factors that contribute to the low rates of college enrollments and educational attainment. These included (a) being unprepared for school since they begin their education, (b) likely coming from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and schools with limited resources and that are ethnically segregated, (c) being unlikely to take or have access to college preparation courses, (d) having parents who did not attend college and tend to lack understanding of the college experience and demands, (e) preferring 2-year colleges over 4-year institutions, (f) experiencing challenges in applying to 4-year institutions with minimal guidance, (g) being undocumented and fearing being “discovered” and deported, (h) experiencing psychological challenges, such as low sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem and limited social support, (i) having financial needs that limit their ability to afford their education. These disadvantages are the result of a larger context of historical inequalities in terms of access to quality public education for different racial and ethnic groups (Piedras et al., 2011; Schneider et al., 2006). Without institutional programs, such as Affirmative Action, the opportunities to pursue higher education degrees are limited for Latinas/os. In the midst of the challenges likely experienced by Latina/o college students, the college experience of Latina/o LGB individuals may be heightened by the intersection of oppressive experiences in regards to race/ethnicity and sexual orientation, in addition to gender in the case of Latina women and Latina/o transgender

individuals. Following is a discussion of Latina/o LGB concerns in order to better understand the cultural context that may be influencing the college experiences.

Latina/o LGB Background

Culture organizes and defines sexuality and sexual orientation (González & Espín, 1996; Manalansan, 1996). Very limited research is available examining LGB issues within the Latina/o population in the U.S. Most of this research has been primarily done with Latino men who have sex with men (MSM; Kim et al., 2012; Manalansan, 1996; Reisen et al., 2010). Latino MSM are likely to be identified as engaging in *bisexual behavior* because many may have women partners and self-identify as heterosexual (Kim et al., 2012; Reisen et al., 2010). The focus on research with MSM has neglected to represent the experiences of Latina lesbian women and/or bisexual Latina/o men and women (Acosta, 2008; González & Espín, 1996; Kim et al., 2012; Muñoz-Laboy et al., 2009; Reisen et al., 2010). Another source of research is studies based in Latin American countries, which serve to inform common understandings of sexual identity and orientation across different Latina/o countries (Gutmann, 2007; Parker, 2008; Ramírez, 1999; Ramírez & García Toro, 2002). I draw upon this existing literature to describe the socio-cultural context of Latinas/os in the U.S. and how this may influence the attitudes of heterosexual Latinas/os and the experiences of LGB Latina/o individuals.

The category Latina/o encompasses a diversity of experiences in terms of nationality, social class, language, and acculturation, among others (González & Espín, 1996; Manalansan, 1996). These will determine the degree to which Latina/o individuals follow identified cultural values and their influence on sexual matters (González & Espín, 1996). For instance, religion, which is likely to condemn same-sex relationships and promote sexuality for the purpose of procreation, plays an influential role in different Latina/o cultures (Acosta, 2008; González &

Espín, 1996; Herek & González-Rivera, 2006). In fact, in a study with participants of Mexican descent, Herek and González-Rivera (2006) found that religious participants from conservative denominations (e.g., Baptist, Mormon, Evangelical, and Pentecostal) expressed more negative attitudes towards LG individuals, compared to participants who were from less conservative denominations (e.g., Catholic and Episcopal) or who did not have a religious denomination.

Another salient cultural value among Latinas/os is gender. One study found that Mexican participants who endorsed traditional gender beliefs were more likely to hold negative attitudes towards LG individuals, and men reported higher levels of negative attitudes than women (Herek & González Rivera, 2006). Attitudes and beliefs about gender and sexuality in Latin America are primarily based on the hierarchy of gender and the private and personal nature of sexuality (Acosta, 2008; González & Espín, 1996; Gutmann, 2007; Manalansan, 1996; Parker, 2008; Ramírez, 1999; Ramírez & García Toro, 2002). *Marianismo* and *machismo* are dichotomous and heterosexist representations of gender roles within the Latina/o culture. *Marianismo* encompasses a dichotomized conceptualization of Latinas whereby sexually discrete women are considered *puras* (pure) and women who do not conform to this are considered *putas* (whores; González & Espín, 1996). A woman's virginity is considered a source of family honor and pride. The value on sexual purity seems to foster negative attitudes towards active sexual behaviors among Latina women, even within a heterosexual marriage (Acosta, 2008; González & Espín, 1996; Herek & González-Rivera, 2006).

On the other hand, *machismo* is regarded as the core organizer of Latino men's sexuality. It is the belief that men can exercise control over women and the expectation that men are sexually active with insatiable sexual appetite (Manalansan, 1996). Women are viewed as sexual conquests important in men's validation of their masculinity, which reinforces the acceptability

of numerous sexual encounters. In Latin America, having the sexual role of the penetrator (i.e., active) is considered a prescriber of masculinity, whereas being penetrated (i.e., passive) is considered feminine and devalued. In fact, some scholars suggest that the gender (i.e., being a man or a woman) of the *sexual object* is not as important in defining sexual identity and orientation as it is the role taken in sexual interactions (Gutmann, 2007; Parker, 2008; Ramírez, 1999; Ramírez & García Toro, 2002). An active man's masculinity and heterosexuality is not in question, yet a passive man is considered gay and as having a woman within; going against normative notions of masculinity (Gutmann, 2007; Parker, 2008; Ramírez & García Toro, 2002). Because social and cultural constructions of gender privilege men and masculinity over women and femininity, the traditional stereotype of homosexuality equating femininity is detrimental for Latino men who may identify as gay.

For Latina migrant *lesbianas*, their experiences are shaped by the intersection and modification of several identities, such as sexual orientation, race, and gender (Acosta, 2008; González & Espín, 1996). Gaining sexual autonomy in the U.S. often comes at the cost of sacrificing their race privilege at their home country. They now experience racism from a different perspective: at their country of origin they experienced it from a privileged position, whereas in the U.S. they experience it from an oppressive position. As systemic inequalities, heterosexism, racism, and sexism are present at their country of origin and in the U.S.; after migrating *lesbianas* experience a shift on their position within these systemic inequalities (Acosta, 2008; González & Espín, 1996), an experience that may also be true for Latino men.

In a qualitative interview study with 15 Latina migrant *lesbianas*, half of participants had disclosed their sexual orientation to their parents (Acosta, 2008). Parents suspected of their sexual orientation but preferred to avoid discussing it and/or asked to not talk about it with other

people. The silence and invisibility of their sexuality was often coupled by the widespread attitude and belief that it is better to be a *puta* (whore) than a *lesbiana* (Acosta, 2008). Moreover, in Latin American countries, the invisibility of *lesbianas* is often legitimized through the acceptability of deep intimacies between women, viewed from a heteronormative and sexist lens in which women are thought to be heterosexual and non-sexual. In the U.S., *lesbianas* often feel isolated from the larger LGB community (Acosta, 2008; González & Espín, 1996).

A similar dynamic was found in a study examining the relation between familism, gender, and bisexual identity among Latina/o youth (Muñoz-Laboy et al., 2009). Participants reported that they felt forced to maintain their bisexuality outside the family system because being “good” sons and daughters implied maintaining normative gender behaviors. Similar to *lesbianas* (Acosta, 2008), Latina/o bisexual participants reported feeling estranged from the primarily EA-LG community because of their bisexual orientation and race (Muñoz-Laboy et al., 2009). *Lesbianas* and bisexual Latina/o youth valued having strong family ties, particularly for emotional and material support (Acosta, 2008; Muñoz-Laboy et al., 2009). Therefore, they had to negotiate their sexual identity with maintaining close family relationships, which often resulted in not disclosing their sexual orientation due to fear of rejection and of dishonoring the family of origin (Acosta, 2008; González & Espín, 1996; Muñoz-Laboy et al., 2009). Therefore, *lesbianas* and Latina/o bisexual youth had to constantly negotiate their other oppressed identities (e.g., race and gender) in the U.S. context, in order to assert their sexual identity and orientation, while hiding this part of their identity from their families in order to maintain close ties.

Nonetheless, traditional understandings of gender and sexuality in Latin America have been evolving in recent years with the development of policies and legislations protecting and guaranteeing the rights of LGB individuals in these countries. For instance, Argentina was the

first country in Latin America to legalize gay marriage in 2010, and gay marriage is also recognized in Mexico City since 2009 (Barrionuevo, 2010; Warren, 2010). Same-sex civil unions were legalized in Ecuador and Uruguay, and in some states of Brazil and Mexico (Barrionuevo, 2010; Warren, 2010). Colombia granted same-sex couples inheritance and health insurance rights (Warren, 2010); there are other Latin American countries with pending legislation (e.g., Chile; Barrionuevo, 2010; Warren, 2010). The increasing openness of Latin American countries to addressing LGB issues provides a context for Latinas/os' beliefs and cultural norms once they immigrate to the U.S.

Now that I discussed higher education challenges for Latinas/os and issues of sexual orientation among this population, I will proceed to discuss the CRM. The CRM was paramount in assessing how prepared was a Latina/o campus community to address LGB issues and make needed changes.

Community Readiness Model

The CRM is a model for promoting community change by assessing the community's readiness for change. The CRM is based on the Transtheoretical Model of Behavior Change (i.e., pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1986) often used in psychotherapy to assess clients' stage of readiness for change. However, the CRM goes beyond an individual level to assess the group and institutional dynamics reinforcing or challenging the issue at hand (Edwards et al., 2000; Jumper-Thurman et al., 2003; Plested et al., 2006; Plested et al., 1998).

In the CRM, there are six dimensions of readiness, which are factors related to the preparedness of the community to make a change on a given issue (Plested et al., 1998). The six dimensions include: (a) community efforts (i.e., the extent of efforts addressing the issue), (b)

community knowledge of the efforts (i.e., the extent to which members are knowledgeable of the efforts, their effectiveness, and the accessibility of the efforts to all members), (c) leadership (i.e., the extent to which leaders and influential members are supportive of addressing the issue), (d) community climate (i.e., prevailing attitude of the community in regards to the issue), (e) community knowledge about the issue (i.e., extent to which the community is knowledgeable about the causes and consequences of the issue and the impact it has in the community), and (f) resources related to the issue (i.e., availability of local resources to support efforts). These dimensions are useful for identifying the needs of the community and developing strategies to address those needs. Moreover, they form the basis of the overall stage of readiness within the community (Plested et al., 2006).

Unless a community is ready to address a certain issue, efforts will be unsuccessful; therefore, assessing the readiness level will ensure that efforts are geared towards where the community stands (Plested et al., 1998). This is accomplished by assessing the community's readiness level within each of the six abovementioned dimensions upon which the community's readiness stage is determined. The CRM has nine stages of readiness that represent the level of awareness of the community about a given problem and their readiness to make changes (Plested et al., 1998). The stages include:

1. No awareness (i.e., not a problem within the community or unrecognized as a problem)
2. Denial or resistance (i.e., few members recognize it as a problem and there is limited acknowledgement that the problem may be locally present)
3. Vague awareness (i.e., most members recognize it as a problem but there is no active plan)

4. Preplanning (i.e., acknowledgement that something must be done, but efforts are not well defined)
5. Preparation (i.e., community leaders begin planning with modest support of the community)
6. Initiation (i.e., evidence is available to justify the efforts and activities are being designed)
7. Stabilization (i.e., efforts and activities are supported by decision makers and administrators within the community and the staff is trained)
8. Confirmation/expansion (i.e., efforts are stable, community members are comfortable with the efforts and support expansion, and local data are obtained in a regular basis)
9. High level of community ownership (i.e., detailed knowledge about the prevalence, causes, and consequences of the issue and continued evaluation guides new directions)

To assess readiness, the CRM recommends interviewing *key informants* who are “community leaders or decision makers who work closely with community members.... and who can provide informed opinions” (p. 3; Lawsin, Borrayo, Edwards, & Belloso, 2007) about the issue at hand (i.e., readiness to address LGB concerns among the Latina/o community on campus). Interviewing key informants is an assessment method taken from community psychology as a way to obtain information to identify the stage of readiness of a community to address a given problem (Jumper-Thurman et al., 2003).

Since its development, the CRM has been used to assess a variety of social issues (e.g., intimate partner violence and health prevention) with diverse ethnic groups, including Latinas/os (see Brackley, Davila, Thornton, Leal, Mudd, Shafer, Castillo, Spears, 2003; Lawsin et al.,

2007). One study examined the readiness of a Latina/o community to prevent intimate partner violence (IPV; Brackley et al., 2003). The community was found to be in the fourth stage, preplanning, recognizing that there was an issue that required attention but the efforts were not detailed. Some of the recommendations consistent with the stage of readiness included: (a) educating the community about IPV, (b) educating children about healthy/unhealthy relationships, (c) including information about IPV in the school curriculum, and (d) involving local organizations in prevention efforts (Brackley et al., 2003). The goal of the preplanning stage is to raise awareness with concrete ideas to address the issue to help the community move forward to the preparation stage where the goal would be to gather existing information about the issues that can be used for planning strategies (Plested et al., 2006).

Another study sought to assess what factors hinder Latina women's participation in clinical trials for breast cancer (BC; Lawsin et al., 2007). They examined two rural and two urban communities; three of the four communities were in the third stage of readiness, meaning that they were in vague awareness of the need to strategize to increase Latina women's participation in BC clinical trials. One of the rural communities was in the fourth stage, preplanning, because they recognized the BC disparities experienced by Latina women and wanted to do something about it but they did not have a defined action plan to address the issue. For the communities in vague awareness, the authors recommended to focus on improving the awareness of the importance of reducing BC health disparities among Latina women at the community and governmental levels. General recommendations were provided for all four communities. Some of these were: (a) organizing community groups that target Latina women at high risk for BC in order to promote their participation in clinical trials, (b) facilitating efforts between clinical trial coordinators and community leaders, and (c) modeling previous effective

strategies used to promote BC screening behaviors within the communities (Lawsin et al., 2007). These interventions are consistent with the vague awareness stage, which has the goal of raising awareness that the community can do something to improve the issue. This will help them move forward to the next stage, preplanning, with the goal of raising awareness with concrete ideas to improve (Plested et al., 2006).

Only a handful of studies have used the CRM to address LGB concerns. Specifically, it has been used to promote HIV prevention among the LGB community (Social Science Research Laboratory, 2009) and guide the development of services for LGB elderly (Carlson & Harper, 2008). The San Diego LGBT Substance Abuse and HIV Task Force assessed the readiness of the local LGBT community to implement policies aimed to reduce high-risk behaviors for HIV/AIDS related to substance use (Social Science Research Laboratory, 2009). This local group was found to be at the sixth stage of readiness, initiation, because efforts had been started but these were still viewed as new and the community needed to incorporate community-specific information and capacity building needed to be provided. Some of the recommendations included: (a) training professionals and paraprofessionals on the CRM, (b) interviewing consumers of services, (c) evaluating efforts, (d) searching resources and funding, and (d) advertising efforts (Social Science Research Laboratory, 2009). The goal for the initiation stage is to provide community-specific information to help the community move to the stabilization stage where the goal would be to stabilize efforts and programs (Plested et al., 2006).

Regarding services for the LGB elderly, CRM research found that the community was at the second stage of readiness, denial/resistance. This suggested that that there is some recognition of the problem, but it is not acknowledged as a local problem that they can solve (Carlson & Harper, 2008). In order to promote change it was suggested to (a) train and educate

staff on LGB issues, (b) place flyers and brochures addressing LGB issues, (c) include LGB information in staff newsletters and other advertisement materials, and (d) provide low intensity and visible media addressing LGB issues within the community (Carlson & Harper, 2008). The goal of interventions at the denial/resistance stage is to raise awareness that the issue exists in this community, so that they can move forward to the next stage, vague awareness, which is to raise awareness that the community can do something to improve the issue (Plested et al., 2006).

To my knowledge, the current study is the only one that has used the CRM to assess a campus community's readiness to address LGB concerns. In the following chapter, I discuss how I used the CRM to assess the Latina/o campus community's readiness to address LGB concerns.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

The current chapter is divided into four sections. First, I reflexively position myself as a researcher. Second, I describe the participants and the selection criteria. Third, I describe the research instrument and the validity and reliability of the instrument. Finally, I discuss the research procedure, including the recruitment, data collection, and the step-by-step analysis guidelines.

Reflexivity

As suggested by Lugo and Maurer (2003), it is critical for scholars to be reflexive about the population they have chosen to study, as well as about themselves as researchers. As a heterosexual Puerto Rican woman who has witnessed the psychological implications of LGB discrimination with close family members, I feel strongly committed to addressing issues of heterosexism and homophobia within the Latina/o community. In my experience, LGB concerns are not discussed in a serious and respectful manner. When discussed, they are likely to be mentioned in the context of jest and derogatory remarks that ridicule non-heterosexual orientations. The taboo about discussing LGB concerns, particularly doing so in a positive light, reinforces negative attitudes and beliefs held by individuals in their communities. Therefore, I believe that an important step to challenge these negative assumptions is to start educating people where they are. Assessing the readiness of institutions that have the potential to influence individuals' attitudes and beliefs is one way to start changing Latinas/os' traditional ways of thinking about LGB issues. My hope is that this study serves as a stepping stone for openly addressing LGB concerns and demystifying the negative assumptions prevalent within the Latina/o community.

Participants

Interviewed participants ($N = 16$) were representatives of different programs and organizations across campus that served Latina/o, ethnic minority, and/or LGB students, faculty, and staff. They included undergraduate ($n = 3$) and doctoral ($n = 3$) students, staff ($n = 6$), and faculty ($n = 4$) as shown in Table 1. Students were in their twenties, whereas faculty/staff had a wider age range. The majority of the participants self-identified as female and one participant self-identified as transgender (female-to-male). Most of the participants self-identified as heterosexual; one woman self-identified as queer. Latina/o self-identified participants ($n = 13$) varied in their Latina/o ancestry, including one participant each from Argentina, Brazil, and Puerto Rico; three from Cuba; and seven from Mexico, which is somewhat representative of Latina/o ancestries on campus. The level of formal education of the staff varied with one having a bachelor's degree, three having a Master's, and two having a doctorate. Student participants were all first generation college students and the highest level of parents' formal education was a high school degree. All participants reported having at least one close friend who self-identifies as LGB.

Participants were chosen as representatives of programs and organizations that offer a variety of services focusing on underrepresented populations on campus. As such, they provided relevant information about the readiness of the Latina/o campus community to address LGB issues. There were a total of nine participants from the programs ($n = 4$) and student organizations ($n = 5$) serving the Latina/o campus community specifically. The other seven participants were representatives of sexual orientation ($n = 2$), multicultural ($n = 3$), and service (i.e., housing and health; $n = 2$) programs where Latinas/os are part of the populations they serve. Although generally the CRM recommends conducting 4-6 interviews, the diversity of

participants' roles within the university context may have facilitated significant differences in how they perceived the Latina/o campus community. In this case, the CRM recommends conducting additional interviews in an effort to obtain a more holistic picture of the community (Plested et al., 2006).

Instruments

Socio-Demographic Information

Socio-demographic information (see Appendix A) was obtained from participants including their age, gender, sexual orientation, Latina/o national ancestry, level of formal education, and level of personal contact with LGB individuals. Students were also asked for their parents' level of formal education.

Community Readiness Assessment

Individual interviews were based on the Community Readiness Assessment (CRA; Plested, Edwards, & Jumper-Thurman, 2006), which included 36 questions to address the six dimensions that helped determine the readiness to address LGB issues within the Latina/o campus community. Consistent with the CRM, I used open-ended questions to inquire about the Latina/o campus community's efforts to address LGB issues. Per the authors' instructions, questions were tailored to be specific to the issue and the community under study. For example, one of the generic questions from the first dimension, *Community efforts* is: "Please describe the efforts that are available in your community to address this issue." After modification to fit the current research project, this question now reads: "Please describe the efforts that are available at your program/organization to address LGB issues within the Latina/o community," with a total of 10 items assessing the first dimension. Other sample questions by dimension include: (a) "What does the Latina/o community on campus know about these LGB efforts or activities?" (4

items; Knowledge of the efforts), (b) “Who are the "leaders" addressing LGB issues within in the Latina/o campus community?” (4 items; Leadership), (c) “What are the primary obstacles to implementing efforts addressing LGB concerns within the Latina/o campus community?” (5 items; Community climate), (d) “What type of information is available within the Latina/o campus community about LGB concerns?” (4 items; Knowledge of the issue), and (e) “Are you aware of any proposals or action plans that have been submitted for funding that address LGB concerns within the Latina/o campus community? If yes, please explain.” (8 items;Resources).

Given the nature of the CRA as a way to assess how prepared a community is to address a given issue at a specific time point, traditional standards for evaluating the validity and reliability of the instrument are not applicable (Plested et al., 2006). The identified community and the issue are not static and are likely to change with time. Also, each application of the model is unique to the specific context being used. Nonetheless, Plested and colleagues (2006) suggest alternative ways in which validity and reliability can be established, which I discuss next.

The CRA is applicable to a variety of phenomena (e.g., facts, attitudes, and opinions) and the possible relations among them. Construct validity cannot be established for this kind of model, but the hypotheses derived from the model can be tested to infer the validity of the model and the instrument (Oetting & Edwards, in press, as cited in Plested et al., 2006). The wide acceptance of the model nationally and internationally can also serve as an indicator of the validity of the model and the instrument as a way to assess a community and provide guidance to the development of stage-appropriate interventions (Plested et al., 2006).

In examining changes in community readiness over time, consistent patterns have been found, which hint towards the reliability of the instrument. Plested and colleagues (2006)

discussed that the communities that were at a low stage of readiness to address drug abuse concerns remained at a low stage over a course of three years, whereas those that were at stage four or above changed in their stage of readiness. Another way to determine the reliability of an instrument is through inter-rater reliability, which can be assessed through the level of consistency among participants' responses, as well as through the inter-rater reliability in the suggested scoring process (Plested et al., 2006). Usually, there is high consistency among respondents, even if they are selected from different community settings. When there are dramatic differences in the ways respondents perceive the community, further interviews are recommended to have a more holistic picture of the dynamics within the community. In using the model it is recommended to have two different people scoring the interviews. The level of agreement has been exceptionally high (i.e., 92% of the time scorers have obtained the same score) and suggests "the effectiveness of the anchored rating scales in guiding appropriate assignment of scores" (Plested et al., 2006, p. 60). This also provides further evidence of construct validity because raters are able to attain the same level of readiness by reading the transcripts and following the rigorous scoring steps, suggesting that the assessment scales are well grounded in the model and minimizing individual interpretation.

Procedures

There are seven recommended steps for conducting a study using the CRM. The first step was to identify the issue to be assessed (i.e., LGB concerns). Second, I identified the Latina/o campus community as my target community. The third step included collecting the data following the CRM interview protocol. In the fourth step, my research advisor and I scored the interview data and reached consensus. Finally, I recommended stage-appropriate strategies based on the Latina/o community's readiness to address LGB concerns. Although it is recommended to

(a) re-assess the community for any changes after the recommended strategies are implemented (sixth step) and (b) widen the scope of the issue as the readiness level improves (seventh step), in this study I only followed steps one through five because this was a needs assessment rather than an intervention study. In this section I discuss the recruitment, data collection, and data analysis procedures that I followed.

Recruitment

Prior to beginning the recruitment process, I obtained approval from the U of I Institutional Review Board (IRB). I contacted representatives from the selected programs/organizations via e-mail to (a) briefly inform them about the study and (b) inquire about their interest to participate. I provided more detailed information about the study and scheduled an interview with representatives who were interested in participating. I contacted representatives from over 12 University programs that directly or indirectly served the Latina/o campus community, and did not receive response from only two faculty/staff representatives of two different programs. For Latina/o student organizations, I first divided the 46 registered organizations at the time of recruitment into eight categories based on their mission and type of organization. These categories were: (a) cultural awareness, (b) dance, (c) political action, (d) pre-professional, (e) services, (f) LGBT awareness, (g) fraternities, and (h) sororities. I randomly selected one organization per category and contacted the representative from the selected ones. I followed up two weeks after the initial contact with a second email inviting them to participate and inquiring about another contact person within the organization if they were not available. When no response was received a week after the second email, I randomly selected another organization within the given category and followed the abovementioned procedure. I continued this process until all representatives from the 46 Latina/o registered organizations were

contacted twice given their limited availability or willingness to participate. Interviewed student participants represented organizations categorized as cultural awareness, political action, LGBT awareness, and fraternities. Only one interview was incomplete because the student participant representing a fraternity scheduled the interview right before another meeting and we were not finished in time. I contacted him twice to finish the interview, but he did not respond. I was able to still score this interview because he provided enough information pertaining to the last dimension, resources, which we were unable to discuss. Altogether, the recruitment process lasted about six months.

Data Collection

I conducted the CRA individual interviews with key informants at a place of their choice (e.g., their office or a research lab) where privacy was ensured and where they felt safe and comfortable. Prior to the interview, I obtained their informed consent. I asked key informants for their permission to be audio-recorded during the interview in order to ensure that data were not lost. Then, I proceeded by asking the socio-demographic questions and administering the CRA. After I finished asking the CRA questions, I followed up with questions from the APAGS-CLGBTC climate guide, but I only include the analysis of the responses to the CRA protocol. The interviews lasted an average of 100 minutes.

Several measures were taken to protect the confidentiality of participants. First, I only used their first names during the interviews. Second, the recordings were transcribed verbatim by four different undergraduate students who received research credit. Two transcribed some of the interviews at a research lab, but due to scheduling conflicts, they preferred to transcribe them from home. At home they accessed a password protected copy of one recording at a time through the Netfiles web-storing system of the university. They uploaded a password protected version of

the transcript in the Netfiles every time they transcribed. Third, we used pseudonyms and codes instead of the real names of participants and the programs/organizations, respectively. Eight of the participants selected their pseudonym, and the rest asked me to select one for them. I coded the programs/organizations as Latina/o programs (LP), sexual orientation programs (SOP), multicultural programs (MCP), service programs (SP), and Latina/o student organizations (LSO). I added a number to these codings (e.g., LP_1) to identify different programs and organizations within each code. Fourth, the consent forms and the interview data (i.e., recordings and transcripts) were kept separate. They were stored under double lock in two different filing cabinets: the consent forms and the key that matches the real names and the pseudonyms are at the office of my research advisor, and the interview data are at the research lab. I also have password protected copies of the interview data in a personal USB. The interview data will be destroyed five years after the final report of the research is complete.

Analysis

I analyzed the data following the CRA scoring procedure for identifying the stages of readiness for the six dimensions (Plested et al., 2006). To enhance the validity of the results, the authors of the assessment recommended to have two independent scorers, which were my research advisor and I. First, we read all the transcripts to get a general impression of the interviews. Second, we scored the answers for each of the six dimensions assessed in the interview, rather than scoring each individual question. Each dimension has different anchored statements that guide the scoring. For instance, the first dimension, *Community efforts*, has a scale ranging from 1 (*no awareness of the need for efforts to address the issue*) to 9 (*evaluation plans are routinely used to test effectiveness of many different efforts, and the results are being used to make changes and improvements*). Sequentially, beginning with the lowest anchored

statement (i.e., 1), we marked the information related to each anchored statement until we could not find supporting evidence for a given anchored statement. For example, if a response statement under the dimension *Community efforts* showed that there was some awareness about the issue, then the statement exceeded the first rating statement and we proceed with finding evidence for the second rating statement, then the third and so on, without skipping any. We stopped when there was no evidence supporting a higher rating statement. We followed the same procedure for each of the six dimensions.

Third, we discussed our scoring and made revisions as needed to achieve consensus on the scores when we disagreed. Fourth, I saved in an Excel spreadsheet our individual scores for each of the six dimensions. I then added our combined scores to the Excel sheet. We added each dimension score across interviews to obtain the total score for each dimension. Fifth, I obtained the mean scores for each dimension by dividing the dimension total score by the number of interviews.

Sixth, I calculated the overall stage of readiness by adding the dimension total scores and dividing it by 6, the number of dimensions. This provided the average readiness score of the community, ranging from 1 (*no awareness*) to 9 (*high level of community ownership*). The readiness scores for each dimension were rounded down, so that a score between 4.0 and a 4.99 corresponded to the fourth stage of readiness or *Preplanning*. This overall score indicated the stage of readiness at which the Latina/o campus community is in regards to addressing LGB concerns. Finally, I listed themes that represent unique aspects or qualities of the community and that relate to the readiness score.

These steps helped me to identify and recommend stage-appropriate strategies that can potentially promote a welcoming environment for LGB individuals within the Latina/o campus

community. I will invite participants to attend a presentation about the findings and suggested strategies as a way to encourage them to become involved in moving forward the Latina/o campus community's readiness to address LGB issues.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, I present the descriptive results using the CRA scoring system.

Participants were representatives of different programs and organizations across campus that serve Latina/o, ethnic minority, and/or LGB students, faculty, and staff. Table 2 shows how the programs/organizations were categorized and the participants representing each. All participant names are pseudonyms. The quotes were edited by removing filler words (e.g., like and am) in order to improve readability and flow.

Latina/o Campus Community Readiness

The aim of the individual interviews was to assess the readiness of the Latina/o campus community to address LGB issues. Table 3 shows the scores for each dimension. In addition to the total score, this table provides a breakdown of scores drawn from student data versus faculty and staff data. This was done because faculty and staff have different roles and positions within the university compared to students. For example, they can act as leaders within the Latina/o community by incorporating Latina/o LGB material in their courses and/or developing outreach events that address Latina/o LGB issues. Also, whereas students are here for a few years and then move on, faculty and staff may be campus community members for their entire careers. Interestingly, faculty/staff scores were more variable than students' scores. This variability may be related to faculty/staff's different experiences with LGB issues in their roles, responsibilities, and tenure at the University.

Regarding mean scores, however, both students and faculty/staff scored at the same stage of readiness for four out of six dimensions. Specifically, four of the six dimensions were at the vague awareness stage of readiness to address LGB issues and promote inclusiveness within the

Latina/o campus community. One dimension, resources, was rated as preplanning. The efforts dimension was rated more highly by students compared to faculty and staff. Specifically, students rated efforts at the initiation stage, but faculty and staff rated it at the preparation level. Thus the efforts and resources dimensions did not match the readiness of the community, as the Latina/o community was perceived to have vague awareness about LGB climate, knowledge of LGB issues and efforts, and leadership.

The overall readiness score for the Latina/o campus community was at the preplanning stage. However, the CRM states that this overall score is meaningless when there is stage variability across the dimensions (Plested et al., 2006). The model recommends that efforts need to focus on strategies that can improve the readiness of the dimensions with the lowest scores, in this case, vague awareness. Following is a discussion of each stage of readiness and the corresponding dimensions beginning with the dimensions with the lowest stages of readiness.

Vague Awareness Stage

Vague awareness suggests that participants felt that there is concern about LGB issues within the Latina/o community, but no immediate motivation to take action for change (Plested et al., 2006). In this section, I will discuss the four dimensions that were at the vague awareness stage, which include community climate, knowledge of efforts, knowledge of issue, and leadership.

Latina/o community climate. The community climate dimension represents participants' perceptions of the prevailing attitudes towards LGB issues within the Latino/a campus community; climate also refers to participants' perceptions regarding the Latino/a community's responsibility to address LGB issues (Plested et al., 2006; Oetting et al., 1995). Participants believed members did not consistently acknowledge LGB issues as a concern

affecting the community at large. In fact, Javier noted that there were other issues that seemed more critical to the Latina/o community, compared to sexual orientation concerns: “Gay, lesbian rights or issues.... Latino especially, are secondary to things like undocumented people or education or retention that we're all a part of.” In the midst of other social issues affecting a majority of the community, discussing LGB issues seemed like a luxury when there are issues that are perceived as more pressing in the community. Therefore, participants perceived that members did not see the need to participate in LGB efforts.

Participants also referred to Latina/o cultural factors that seem to influence their attitudes towards addressing LGB issues. Esperanza explained that there is “a lack of awareness often times and there's an unwillingness to approach it [Latina/o LGB concerns], to understand it because of, again, that higher patriarchal type of culture and sometimes religious.” Giselle described the impact of what she called the “culture of silence” and its intersection with gender norms:

There's definitely this culture of silence.... you know there's lots of homophobia.... I just think about, people still being, I don't know, ashamed of coming out. You know, it's that sense of fear or anxiety that people get when other people come out.... [Latina/o student] organizations, [have] sort of the need to conform to a certain, you know, gender, to perform a certain gender [role] in order to have access to these organizations.... it's gender policing.... there's a process to go through and they're gender exclusive, but when it comes up to discussions about, you know, non-gender conforming people, well, how do they have access to the organization? You know, how can they comfortably claim a space in that organization?

Moreover, Rodrigo explained how not addressing Latina/o LGB issues impacts the community climate:

I think in that failure of intersecting these identities, in engaging in that dialogue when that [an LGB-related issue] happens, that renders people, individuals, that creates an idea that well, you know, there's not people out there that are gay and Latino, which is not true.

In fact, Sandy explained that some Latina/o community members use heterosexist and homophobic jest under the assumption that they are not around LGB individuals: “I don't know if they would put it that way [that they are discriminating]. Yeah, I see a lot of humor that is seen as harmless because that kind of humor, well no one is gay here, so I can say ‘that's so gay.’”

Participants who have organized and participated in LGB efforts, believed in the importance of addressing intersecting identities such as race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation in order to improve the climate. However, all of the participants reported that LGB efforts are often delegated to a program targeting sexual minorities on campus in which the environment tends to be primarily European American. Joyce explained the challenge that this represents for ethnic minority LGB individuals in the following quote:

If someone is perhaps struggling with their identities and how to best reconcile their multiple identities, I am concerned... due to the complaints that I've heard directly, as well as indirectly... I don't really see where there are the resources that are present to them [Latina/o LGB individuals]... Because [some] don't feel comfortable [going] to the sexual orientation program... The diversity, with ethnic diversity alone, has greatly changed [at the sexual orientation program] and self-admitted by the previous director it was a very

White gay male space, which obviously is a turn off for folks of color, and that has changed, but yet it's still a very intimidating [space].

Martín elaborated on this issue stating that there are Latina/o LGB individuals who struggle with finding a space where they can validate these intersecting identities:

[Some are] not wanting to be out within a Latino context on campus and so they're kind of placed in a really odd situation.... in a double bind, you know, with what organization do I identify? Who can I turn to for support?... [This] might prevent students from walking into those spaces [Latina/o and sexual orientation programs] because they think already from the start that they won't be accepted.

Inherent in these statements is the idea that Latina/o LGB individuals do not tend to feel welcome in Latina/o or LGB spaces on campus. Therefore, some may feel the need to choose to affirm one of their identities at the cost of the other. Joyce elaborated on this conflict that some Latina/o LGB students experience:

I think we fall back to those notions of, well, I can pass or hide my sexual identity and.... I may not be able to hide my Latina/o identity.... we have students that will 'preference' an identity, and I hate to use that word, but that really is what it boils down to.... and then those students hang out at a Latina/o program; versus the other students that will, I guess, 'preference'.... their sexual identity and then hang out [at a sexual orientation program].... It is a disservice to our students to feel like they're more comfortable in one space over the other. And how do we engage them and lead them to, you know, step out of that comfort zone and experience both centers and what they have to offer?

Vague awareness of LGB issues on this dimension suggests that the climate for Latina/o LGB individuals is one of silence and invisibility. Members of the Latina/o campus community

were perceived by participants as lacking understanding of the importance of addressing intersecting identities and promoting an inclusive environment within the community. The Latina/o campus community knows that LGB people exist, but there is no immediate motivation from community members to take steps to improve the climate and make changes to meet their needs.

Community knowledge of Latina/o LGB efforts. The second dimension that was at the vague awareness stage according to participants was community knowledge of Latina/o LGB efforts. This dimension examines the extent to which community members know about local and current efforts, as well as the efforts' effectiveness and accessibility to all segments of the community (Plested et al., 2006). Gimena noted the lack of knowledge about the efforts in her experiences working with Latina/o students: "Not that much. I've talked to students about the ally training and how they could be more aware and sensitive to LGBT issues. A lot of the students that I've worked with or just know informally, don't, have never even heard of these ally trainings." Rodrigo further explained: "There definitely has to be more work in exploring how the LGB identity intersects with others ... I don't feel a lot has been done for the Latino population." Overall, participants believed that not many Latina/o community members have heard of the efforts, and if they have, the extent of their knowledge is limited.

Some participants who were actively involved in addressing LGB issues within the community were able to identify strengths and weaknesses of these efforts. A major strength is the existence of highly committed students, faculty, and staff, which Rafaelina discussed in the following quote:

I think their strengths are, for the ones who are involved in it, are very concerned and they're very active and they're good students. I mean they don't seem to get tired.... I

mean their events are fantastic so that's why. I think the strength, too, is that there may not be a lot of faculty and staff involved but the ones who are, are truly caring and also some of them are in good positions of power who've been here for a long time, some are tenured some are counseling psychologists. They are expert in their field, but they are also in some positions of power that can really help navigate through getting resources...so those are the strengths I think... We have openness about it that allows students who are questioning to know they are in a safe place where they can come in and have discussion and feel safe in doing that.

Despite the commitment of Latino/a community leaders to make progress on LGB issues, their commitment is not shared by a majority of Latino/a students. For example, Diego reported the challenge he experiences with "following through" with programming:

I don't really see the Latino students showing up to these events. For example, to a sexual orientation event, that's supposed to be a shared campus experience and it doesn't really feel [that way]. And we advertise in every type of ally training, this is a place to go where you can go and study, you can go with friends, it's a non-alcoholic event, on a Tuesday night and it's typically White students that show up, there's not a lot of diversity. So I'm like well, what's happened after we've done this? Do they not feel welcome? Were they not paying attention? Is there something that we're not doing to facilitate a process to have students go to a sexual orientation program; go to these shared community events? So, I guess a weakness may be what would be a follow through? Who takes over the follow through?

In general, the Latina/o campus community seems to have limited knowledge about Latina/o LGB efforts. The few who know about them have been involved in the organization of

such efforts. Therefore, the vague awareness about Latina/o LGB efforts demonstrates an inconsistency between the general community attitude of indifference and that of the Latino/a leadership concerned with addressing LGB issues. In order for efforts to succeed in promoting change, leaders need to take into account this disconnect.

Community knowledge of Latina/o LGB issues. Community members' limited knowledge about Latina/o LGB efforts results from their limited knowledge of Latina/o LGB issues, which is the third dimension rated at the vague awareness stage. This dimension assesses the degree of knowledge that community members have about the impact that the issue has on the community, as well as the causes and consequences of the issue (Plested et al., 2006). Participants perceived that Latina/o campus community members were ill informed about LGB issues in general, as well as about issues specific to their community. Manuel described his and other Latina/o students' limited knowledge of LGB issues:

They're not very knowledgeable about it, and that's just because again within our families back at home, the majority of the students who might be of Mexican descent, sex, in general, is taboo. Anything dealing with lesbians, bisexuals or gays is awful, even to a greater extent is more taboo.... We come into this campus with a somewhat very limited knowledge of LGB concerns, and even here, when we come in here, we're just kind of touch the surface of the issues so I don't think we're very knowledgeable about it. And I can say that on my behalf I'm not very knowledgeable about it and I've been here for a few years.

Additionally, information about Latina/o LGB issues and campus local data was limited or non-existent across the different programs and organizations, limiting the acquisition of LGB information among interested community members. Mercedes, who is in an administrative

position of a Latina/o program, reported not knowing about any LGB-related data specific to Latinas/os:

I'm not aware of the data. I mean, in terms of, for example, the population, the number of students who are Latinos who might be gay or any kind of hate, anti-gay hate, and that might occur on campus, I'm not aware of that data being available. I've never heard of data being available or where it would be.

Latina/o leadership. This dimension examines the extent to which leaders within the Latina/o community are supportive of LGB issues (Plested et al., 2006). The Latina/o leadership dimension was also at the vague awareness stage, which suggests that leaders recognize the need to address LGB issues. In fact, all participants reported that LGB issues are a concern to the Latina/o community leadership, as Bill stated: "There are people who have administrative positions, again, it's a concern and it's a concern they're aware of and supportive of." However, when asked more specifically, participants either did not know of any leaders addressing LGB issues within the Latino/a community, or they knew leaders who were involved sporadically, for example by helping organize or sponsor lecture presentations, having guest speakers, having movie discussions, and partnering with sexual orientation programs or organizations. None of the participants were aware of any committee or task force within the Latina/o community that might be meeting regularly to discuss Latina/o LGB issues and efforts.

In addition, two student participants who advocate for Latina/o LGB issues within their organizations felt that when LGB issues were addressed, they were presented in a subtly discounting way by bringing in "outsiders" rather than relying on internal dialogue. This was believed to prevent progress from occurring. Guadalupe articulated this issue in the following quote:

I think that they're [leaders] more concerned with, you know, representing, bringing someone to talk about the issues for them, so that they don't really have to talk, engage, right? And that's gonna solve the problem, that's gonna be like: 'We dealt with the issue, we accept it because we brought someone who can talk about THEIR experience who is far detached from all the others.' And I think that's an important piece, how the more detached from an issue that is foreign to you, the easier it is for you.

Consistent with the vague awareness stage of readiness for the community climate, knowledge of LGB issues and efforts, and leadership dimensions; the Latina/o campus community was characterized by leaders' overall concern on the importance of addressing LGB issues. However, leaders' concern is challenged by participants' perception that there seemed to be limited motivation from Latina/o community members to make changes that can promote a more inclusive Latina/o campus community by engaging in LGB issues and efforts.

Preplanning Stage

The dimension, LGB resources, assessed the extent of resources available to support Latina/o LGB efforts was at the preplanning stage, which is one stage higher than vague awareness. Preplanning suggests that the community has individuals, organizations, and/or space that can be used as resources, but these are not clearly defined (Plested et al., 2006). Participants perceived that community leaders would be interested in addressing Latina/o LGB issues, but they had differing beliefs about community members' support for LGB efforts due to the community climate previously discussed. In terms of resources within the Latina/o campus community, participants did not think that there is a broad base of individuals with expertise on Latina/o LGB issues who could volunteer time and be contacted for either LGB programming efforts or in case of LGB discrimination. Instead, participants reported that a sexual orientation

program may have more resources for developing LGB efforts and responding to events of discrimination, as Jessica suggested:

I would probably say [that Latina/o LGB individuals would go to] a sexual orientation program because everyone knows it's there. I don't know if people really use it the way they should, but I know it would either be a Latina/o program, to talk to people there to feel supported, or straight to a sexual orientation program to talk to the people that work there.

Material resources, such as space, money, and time seemed inconsistently available.

Participants identified spaces at different Latina/o programs, as well as potential funding sources that have been and can be used for programming efforts. However, Additionally, participants did not know of any action plans to seek out funding aimed at addressing LGB issues specific to the Latina/o community on campus. Finally, LGB efforts within the Latino/a campus community have not been evaluated, which makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of these efforts and the resources needed to improve the climate for Latina/o LGB individuals.

Preparation/Initiation Stage

Faculty/staff and students had different perceptions of the stage of readiness of the community in regards to the dimension Latina/o community LGB efforts. The mean rating for faculty/staff on this dimension was at the preparation stage, which is one stage higher than preplanning. The mean rating for students was at the initiation stage, which is one stage higher than preparation. Preparation suggests that leaders are actively planning efforts, but that the community offers only modest support. Initiation suggests that there is sufficient information available to support and justify the Latina/o LGB programming and that programs and activities have been implemented (Plested et al., 2006).

The community efforts dimension assessed the extent to which there are efforts, programs, and policies that address LGB issues (Plested et al., 2006). There was variability within the faculty/staff scores that appears related to their level of involvement with Latina/o LGB efforts. Three staff participants rated the efforts lower because they did not know of existent LGB efforts specific to the Latina/o campus community, which suggests that efforts are not widespread or not well advertised. The other faculty and staff participants rated this dimension higher because they have organized Latina/o LGB efforts themselves. Students were aware of efforts specific to the Latina/o community, but they reported limited participation in these efforts. Therefore, it seems important to educate students about the importance of addressing LGB issues because some do not see the need for participating in the efforts, as Sandy explains:

I think that people know about the efforts, and I think they assess on a personal level whether they need to be involved or not. One of the things that you see, and I don't think this is specific to the Latino community at all, is 'I have a friend' or 'I have a cousin who's gay' and so 'I don't need to go to these programs because I get it already.' Or, 'I read an essay, and so I get it'. ...And they don't necessarily push themselves to understand more.

It is important to better understand the gap between the leadership efforts to address LGB issues and the Latina/o campus community members' participation in these efforts. Karen explained this gap in terms of the negative "bias" that Latina/o community members may have about discussing LGB issues: "It is bias because people are not open to talk[ing] about it...and confront this issue." The idea of a "bias" seems to be related to cultural understandings of sexuality, in general, and LGB concerns, more specifically, as taboo topics within a traditional

Latina/o culture. Because some community members find it unnecessary to participate in LGB efforts, and others have a “bias” against discussing LGB issues, the efforts have not been fruitful in making changes to have a more inclusive Latina/o campus community.

In sum, four of the six community readiness’ dimensions, specifically community climate, knowledge of LGB issues and efforts, and leadership, were at the third stage of readiness, vague awareness. The resources dimension was in the preplanning stage, which is one stage higher. Students and faculty/staff rated the community efforts dimension at different stages, with faculty/staff rating it at the fifth stage, preparation, and students rating it at the sixth stage, initiation. Three out of the nine stages did not emerge from participants’ reports for none of the six dimensions. These included stabilization, confirmation/expansion, and high level of community ownership. Even though Latina/o LGB efforts are in place and are supported by Latina/o campus community leaders, the community’s support of these efforts is limited. Findings suggest that there is no evidence of (a) stability of efforts, (b) in-depth evaluation of efforts’ effectiveness, (c) members’ perceived need for change and/or expansion of efforts, and (d) Latina/o LGB-related data obtained on a regular basis. These provide some insight about the level and types of interventions needed to move the community forward.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The current study contributes to our knowledge and understanding of LGB concerns within the Latina/o community through the novel use of the CRA to conduct a readiness assessment on a college campus setting. Moreover, it provides the unique opportunity to examine the intersection of two socially oppressed groups in terms of ethnicity and sexual orientation at a community level, rather than at an individual level. To my knowledge, there is no other study that has examined a Latina/o community and their readiness to address LGB issues. The CRA proved to be an excellent method to assess a Latina/o campus community's readiness to address LGB concerns. Identifying the stage of readiness of the Latina/o community was imperative in order to obtain culturally-relevant recommendations to develop efforts that promote a more welcoming environment for Latina/o LGB individuals and that meet the community where they are. These efforts are critical if we want to improve the psychological wellbeing and academic success of Latina/o students, including students who self-identify as LGB. The educational pipeline for Latinas/os in general is already endangered by the challenges they experience even before being enrolled at a university; therefore, it is an institutional responsibility to meet the needs of this traditionally underserved population (see Piedra et al., 2011).

This chapter is organized by the research questions guiding this study, which include: (a) What is the climate for LGB individuals within the Latina/o campus community?, (b) How ready is the Latina/o community on campus to implement interventions addressing LGB concerns and promoting a welcoming environment within their community?, (c) What efforts have been made within the Latina/o community to address issues of LGB prejudice and discrimination? What has been the response of the community towards those efforts?, and (d) How can the Latina/o

community on campus address more effectively LGB issues and concerns in a way that is consistent to their level of readiness and context? Finally, I discuss the strengths and limitations of this study.

Latina/o Campus Community LGB Climate

The climate for LGB individuals within the Latina/o campus community seems to be one of invisibility and silence, which is consistent with conceptual (e.g., González & Espín, 1996; Ramírez, 1999) and empirical (e.g., Acosta, 2008; Herek & González-Rivera, 2006; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008; Zea et al., 1999) literature about Latina/o LGB concerns. The community is aware that Latina/o LGB individuals exist, but community members do not seem to have an immediate motivation to make changes to meet their needs within the community. There appeared to be a mismatch between the interest and investment of leaders in addressing LGB issues and the limited response and engagement from community members, particularly students. This relates to previous literature suggesting that students are more likely to hold prejudiced attitudes towards LGB individuals, compared to faculty and staff (Brown et al., 2004; Brown et al., 2002; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008).

Moreover, participants believed that Latina/o students did not perceive LGB issues to be relevant problems directly affecting the Latina/o campus community at large. In fact, they reported that there were other ethnically-related problems that were more salient to the community, such as academic achievement, retention, and immigration (see Piedra et al., 2011). This was also consistent with a study of African American GB students who reported that issues related to their ethnic identity were more salient than sexual orientation issues (Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011). Latina/o cultural factors (e.g., religion and gender roles) were also noted as influencing the community's attitudes towards addressing LGB issues, also found in other

studies with Latinas/os (e.g., Herek & González-Rivera, 2006; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008) and European Americans (e.g., Yost & Gilmore). Moreover, some participants stated that Latinas/os in general tend to have heterosexist and homophobic attitudes and beliefs that influence their knowledge and support for LGB issues. Consequently, the responsibility to address LGB issues on campus was often relegated to a sexual orientation program, deemphasizing the need to address intersecting identities and acknowledge LGB concerns as part of the Latina/o community.

Consistent with EM-LGB literature, participants reported that Latina/o LGB individuals on campus often feel that they have to choose one identity over the other in order to cope with the oppression and discrimination they experience (Evans & D'Augelli, 1996; González & Espín, 1996; Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011; Manalansan, 1996; Muñoz-Laboy et al., 2009; Savin-Williams, 1996). Because their sexual orientation is an identity that they may be able to hide, some Latina/o LGB individuals may choose their ethnic identity in order to feel welcomed and accepted within the Latina/o community at a predominantly EA institution (see also Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011). In addition, LGB programs and organizations on campus are primarily European American, which place Latina/o LGB individuals in a difficult position if they do not feel welcomed and accepted in this environment (see also Goode-Cross & Tager, 2011). These findings were consistent with the results of a previous campus climate assessment done at the Midwestern State University, where Rankin and colleagues (2006) found that some EM-LGB were likely to conceal their sexual orientation within their racial/ethnic group to avoid discrimination, and did not feel comfortable in primarily EA-LGB contexts.

As a way to deal with this challenge, Martín, described the importance of promoting an affirming and inclusive environment within programs targeting Latina/o students: “I think that’s

why it's so important to do LGB programming within a Latino context, so that students who don't feel comfortable going to the sexual orientation program, have that context within which to address issues of sexuality." As Martín suggested, this demonstrates the importance of having an affirming and inclusive environment within the Latina/o community where Latina/o LGB individuals can validate both identities.

The community climate reported by participants makes it harder to establish partnerships between Latina/o and sexual orientation programs and organizations that can support the development and implementation of Latina/o LGB efforts. In the midst of the various institutional challenges experienced by Latina/o individuals on campus, particularly students, addressing LGB may not be prioritized. Therefore, it is imperative to strategize interventions geared at recognizing that LGB issues are relevant to the Latina/o campus community, instead of making interventions assuming its relevance and that do not match the community's readiness for change.

Latina/o Campus Community Readiness

The CRM assessment suggested that the Latina/o campus community was overall at the fourth stage of readiness, *preplanning*. However, because there was variability of readiness across dimensions, the CRM recommends promoting efforts consistent with the lowest stage of readiness for the community (Plested et al., 2006), in this case *vague awareness*. This variability of readiness illustrated that the Latina/o community seems to be divided in terms of how prepared they are to make changes toward addressing LGB concerns relevant to their community. Latina/o campus community leaders seemed ready to implement interventions addressing LGB concerns, while community members, particularly students, seemed vaguely prepared to take action in promoting a welcoming environment within their community.

Therefore, the interventions to support change in the community need to be consistent with the *vague awareness* stage in order to meet community members at their level of readiness. *Vague awareness* suggests that the community is beginning to recognize that LGB issues should be addressed, but there is limited motivation to make change. Community members seem to have vague or stereotyped ideas about Latina/o LGB issues. Finally, the Latina/o leadership is limited in terms of not having a broad range of volunteers with the energy and motivation to work on addressing the problem.

Latina/o Campus Community LGB Efforts

Efforts addressing LGB issues within the Latina/o community have been running for almost a decade, therefore, this dimension was at the highest stage of readiness for the community. Efforts have included Latina/o Ally Trainings, invited guest speakers, workshops, and/or live music events addressing Latina/o LGB concerns. Despite this significant history of efforts, the community is at a very early stage of readiness. The efforts seem to be further ahead from community members' readiness to address LGB issues and thus have proven to be ineffective. Congruency and consistency of motivation from both leaders and members are imperative to promote change in the community (Oetting et al., 1995; Plested et al., 2006). If the Latina/o community does not consistently support LGB efforts, these will not be successful in effecting change to increase the level of readiness of the community. Consequently, it is important to better understand the gap between the leadership efforts to address LGB issues and the community members' participation in those efforts. The changing nature of the Latina/o community within a campus context may explain this mismatch. Faculty and staff community members are likely to be more permanent, compared to student members who come and go each

year. This might explain the disconnect between the leaders' investment in efforts and the inconsistent response from community members, who are primarily students.

In addition to having inconsistent support from community members, current efforts are not centralized and are developed independently. If participants knew of former or current Latina/o LGB efforts, they were not aware of those developed outside their program/organization, but they were aware of general campus LGB efforts. It seems important to work on centralizing the efforts and establishing partnerships within different programs/organizations serving Latina/o students to strengthen ongoing efforts consistent with the community's level of readiness. As long as leaders continue to develop generic interventions disconnected from the context of the community, efforts will be unsuccessful.

Strategies by Community's Stage of Readiness

The CRM recommends strategies that the Latina/o campus community can utilize to more effectively address LGB concerns in a way that is consistent to their cultural context and *vague awareness* readiness for change. Strategies and interventions must meet the community at their level of readiness and focus on the lowest stage across dimensions (Plested et al., 2006), in this case, *vague awareness*. The main goal to move beyond this stage is to raise awareness of the importance of addressing Latina/o LGB issues in order to improve negative attitudes towards LGB individuals and promote a more inclusive environment within the community. Initial interventions need to facilitate the development of groups or committees that can brainstorm strategies appropriate to the Latina/o campus community's *vague awareness* stage. According to the CRM, ways to reach out a community in this stage may include (a) getting on the agenda of unrelated Latina/o community events to present Latina/o LGB information, (b) presenting LGB information for different Latina/o groups and organizations, (c) posting flyers and posters about

Latina/o LGB groups and organizations at the different programs/organizations serving the Latina/o community, (d) beginning to initiate Latina/o LGB events to present more in-depth information about these intersecting identities, (e) conducting informal surveys and interviews with Latina/o community members, (f) developing written materials with general information about Latina/o LGB issues and local implications, and (g) publishing newspaper editorials and articles discussing these intersecting identities (Plested et al., 2006). These efforts will increase the visibility of LGB concerns and related programming, as well as encourage more representation and action from University officials and students, consistent with previous recommendations for improving the climate at the Midwestern State University (see Rankin et al., 2006).

Special efforts need to be directed to heterosexual Latina/o students, primarily men, who are likely to espouse traditional gender and religious beliefs (see also González Guzmán et al., 2007; Herek & González, 2006; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008; Toro-Alfonso & Varas-Díaz, 2004). The main aim of efforts should be to use Latina/o students' perceptions of religion and gender and reframe them to help reconcile their beliefs with acceptance of diverse sexual orientations. For instance, it might help to focus in the message of love inherent in most religions, and/or challenge the stereotypes of femininity and masculinity attributed to gay and lesbian individuals, respectively. All participants reported that they know at least one close person who self-identifies as LGB. Research suggested that knowing someone who self-identifies as LGB seems to ameliorate negative attitudes among heterosexuals (González Guzmán et al., 2007; Herek & González, 2006; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008; Toro-Alfonso & Varas-Díaz, 2004). Therefore, it might be useful to organize panels where self-identified Latina/o LGB leaders on campus can talk about their experiences related to their dual minority status. This may provide more visibility

to Latina/o LGB individuals and improve the negative attitudes of those who do not have a close LGB friend.

A majority of Latina/o students are characterized by their advocacy and activism in ethnic identity issues; using their language of social justice in the context of sexual orientation may encourage them to become involved. It would also be important to promote self-examination and self-awareness of community members' attitudes as a way to promote change. This can be followed by discussions about the benefits of becoming LGB allies through workshops or trainings, as means for professional development (see also Rankin, 2006). Using these direct strategies can support Latina/o community members in moving beyond the stigma associated with the LGB community toward openly discussing Latina/o LGB issues. It is important to note that all participants strongly believed that negative attitudes toward LGB issues may be outweighed by knowledge acquisition. In fact, studies in Puerto Rico suggest that establishing interventions that address LGB concerns is a promising way to improve negative attitudes given that students who had education on LGB issues had lower levels of social distance (González Guzmán et al., 2007; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008; Toro-Alfonso & Varas-Díaz, 2004). Finally, given their tendency to report low levels of negative attitudes, prejudice and social distance, faculty and staff may be used as allies to promote a more inclusive environment for Latina/o LGB individuals (see Brown et al., 2002; Brown et al., 2004; Fine, 2011; Rankin et al., 2010; Toro-Alfonso et al., 2008; Yost & Gilmore, 2011). In fact, in their campus climate assessment of the Midwestern State University, Rankin and colleagues (2006) underscored the importance of faculty and staff in promoting inclusiveness given that they are the "most enduring institutional members" (p. 7) and may have significant impact on students' development and attitudes.

An important limitation raised by participants was that leaders and community members did not seem to prioritize LGB concerns amid the immediate problems affecting the Latina/o campus at large, namely, recruitment, retention, and immigration issues. The Latina/o community is already struggling with having their academic and educational needs met; therefore, getting involved in LGB efforts might seem like a luxury when there are other issues that seem more pressing. In an effort to meet the Latina/o campus community where they are, the LGB campus community needs to be flexible and sensitive to their level of readiness. It seems imperative that the LGB campus community partners with the Latina/o campus community showing interest and addressing the issues important to them (e.g., recruitment and retention) in order to building coalitions and promote a shared understanding of the impact that experiencing oppression may have in the academic functioning of Latina/o and/or LGB individuals. Additionally, emphasizing and educating about the psychological implications (see Zea et al., 1999) of LGB discrimination may help the Latina/o community to perceive LGB issues equally important. Finally, educating the Latina/o campus community about the policies and legislations in Latin American countries protecting the rights of LGB individuals may help promote the notion that LGB issues are indeed Latina/o issues as well.

Limitations and Implications

This study has some limitations that should be noted. First, the use of the CRM may have neglected other factors that explain the readiness of the Latina/o community to address LGB issues beyond the six dimensions that were assessed. To minimize this limitation, I incorporated a climate guide and followed-up participants' responses, in addition to doing a thematic analysis of the data. A second limitation is the reliance on key informants given that their reports may represent the mainstream views within the community. In order to have diverse perspectives of

the Latina/o community readiness, I interviewed 16 representatives (twice the CRM recommendation) of various programs across campus that served the Latina/o community directly and indirectly.

Despite these limitations, this is one of the first studies to assess the readiness of a Latina/o community to address LGB issues. Previous studies focused on individual factors, such as attitudes and beliefs (e.g., Herek & Gonzalez, 2006; Toro-Alfonso & Varas-Díaz, 2004; Zea et al., 1999). Findings from this study can inform the development of LGB efforts in a way that is culturally relevant for the Latina/o population. Assessing the readiness of a Latina/o community was the first step towards ameliorating the experiences of discrimination based on sexual orientation by promoting the creation of a space to find support in dealing with both racism and heterosexism. This community readiness approach can also be used with other ethnic minority groups where heterosexism and homophobia may be prevalent, as well as with primarily EA-LGB communities where racist attitudes and beliefs may prevail. More specific to the university context, this study can inform the development of stage appropriate interventions that can potentially challenge LGB prejudice and discrimination at institutions of higher education, which has been widely documented in the literature (D'Augelli, 1989; Herek, 1993; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2006). In addition, this study expands the scope of the CRM by using it to promote inclusiveness and cultural competence on LGB concerns; therefore reinforcing the trustworthiness of the model across various contexts and social issues.

CHAPTER 6

TABLES

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variables	Students (n = 6)	Faculty/Staff (n = 10)	Total (N = 16)
Age	20-29	31-57	-
Gender			
Female	3	6	9
Transgender	1	-	1
Male	2	4	6
Sexual Orientation			
Lesbian	-	1	1
Queer	-	1	1
Gay	-	3	3
Heterosexual	6	5	11
Ethnic Ancestry			
South American	-	2	2
Caribbean	1	3	4
Mexican	5	2	7
African American	-	1	1
Asian American	-	1	1
European American	-	1	1
Level of Formal Education			
Undergraduate Student	3		3
Doctoral Student	3		3
Bachelor's Degree		1	1
Master's Degree		3	3
Doctoral Degree		6	6
Parents' Level of Formal Education			
None	1	-	1
Elementary School	2		2
High School	3		3

Table 2. Participants' pseudonyms by programs/organizations

Programs/ Organizations	Latina/o programs	Latina/o student organizations	Multicultural programs	Sexual orientation programs	Student service programs
Participants	Karen	Giselle	Bill	Diego	Gimena
	Martín	Guadalupe	Esperanza	Joyce	Rodrigo
	Mercedes	Javier	Rafaelina		
	Sandy	Jessica			
		Manuel			

Table 3. Stage of Readiness by Dimension

Dimension	Students' Scores (n = 6)		Fac/Staff Scores (n = 10)		Total Scores (n = 16)		Stage of Readiness
	<i>M</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	Range	
	Community climate	3	1-5	3.2	1-5	3.12	
Knowledge of efforts	3.33	3-4	3.5	2-5	3.43	2-5	Vague Awareness
Community knowledge of issue	3.5	3-4	3.6	1-5	3.56	1-5	Vague Awareness
Leadership	3.5	2-5	3.8	1-6	3.68	1-6	Vague Awareness
Resources	4.66	4-6	4.5	1-6	4.56	1-6	Preplanning
Efforts	6*	3-7	5.6	1-7	5.75	1-7	Preparation
Community Stage of Readiness	4	2.66- 4.66	4.03	1.33- 5.33	4.02	1.3 3- 5.3 3	Preplanning

**Initiation Stage, not Preparation*

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APPENDIX A

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC FORM

Pseudonym: _____

Demographic information

Age: _____

Gender: ___ Transgender ___ Female ___ Male ___ Prefer not to answer

Sexual orientation: ___ Bisexual ___ Lesbian ___ Gay ___ Heterosexual ___

Prefer not to answer

Latina/o national ancestry: _____

Level of formal education: _____

[Students Only] Parents' level of formal education: _____

Do you know people who are close to you and self-identify as LGB?

___ Yes / ___ No