PRESSURES TO SUCCEED AND DIMINISHED MANHOODS: GENDERED RACISM AND THE MODEL MINORITY SON

Psychotherapy with Men Conference IV
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Objectives

(1) develop a clear sense of how masculinity ideology, gender role conflict, and racism intersect and vary across the life span of Asian American men; and

(2) consider different strategies for addressing gendered racism experiences of Asian American men in a clinical setting.

Getting Started

- My Own Journey
- Mental Health Theories and Androcentrism
- Acknowledging Men's Privilege and Reconciling Health Data
- Lack of Data on Asian Americans as a whole – men, included
- Model Minority

Hegemonic Masculinity

Men are broadly socialized to:

Conformity to this masculinity is associated with:

Hegemonic Masculinity

Men are broadly socialized to:

- avoid femininity, seek adventure, respond with violence when provoked, and maintain respect (David & Brannon, 1976);

- suppress emotions and assert dominance (O'Neil, 1982).

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Hegemonic Masculinity

Men are broadly socialized to:

- avoid femininity, seek adventure, respond with violence when provoked, and maintain respect (David & Brannon, 1976);
- suppress emotions and assert dominance (O'Neil, 1982).

Conformity to this masculinity is associated with:

- negative attitudes toward help-seeking;
- depressive symptoms and other mental health outcomes;
- alcohol abuse;
- (Internalized) Homophobia;
- aggressive behaviors;
- risk-taking behaviors

Masculinity Ideology and Theories

- Gender Role Socialization Paradigm
  - Gender Role Strain Paradigm
  - Gender Role Conflict Theory
- Social Constructionist Perspectives
  - Masculinity has been conceived from a psychological essentialist perspective.
  - Though there is overlap in masculinity across cultural groups, older theories do not attend cultural values or intersectionality.
  - Demonstration of Masculinity varies within a man depending on context and time.
  - Men may engage in certain behaviors to assert their masculinity but this will vary depending on the situation and on the men individually.

Racism

- Structural
- Cultural
- Individual
  - Vandalism, Slurs, Microaggressions, Differential Treatment at Work/School, Physical Violence, Vicarious

Experiences of Racism

- Beyond the Model Minority what are stereotypes of Asian Americans?

Experiences of Racism

- Beyond the Model Minority what are stereotypes of Asian Americans?

- Perpetual Foreigner (English skills questioned, nativity status questioned)
- Quiet, Plotting, and Sneaky
- Lacking Social and or Leadership Skills
- "Hard-wired" to be STEM-Oriented
- Bad Driving
- Gender-based…

Outcomes of Racism

- Mental Health Outcomes
  - depression, anxiety, psychological distress
- Behavioral Health Outcomes
  - substance use, interpersonal problems

Racism and Gender-Related Stressors

- Critique of Racism and Masculinities literature.
  - Ignoring Cultural Values
  - Racialized Sexism and Gendered Racism

Asian Cultural Values and Masculinity

What are Asian values and how might they influence masculinity among Asian men?

Asian Cultural Values and Masculinity

(Liu & Chang, 2007)

What are Asian values and how might they influence masculinity among Asian men?

- Filial Piety
- Duty, Responsibility, and Diligence
- Honor and Dignity
- Respect, Obedience, Politeness, Harmony
- Morality
- Expectation to Share in Domestic Responsibilities
- Be a Success

How might they shape men's experiences across the lifespan?

Contrasting Masculinities

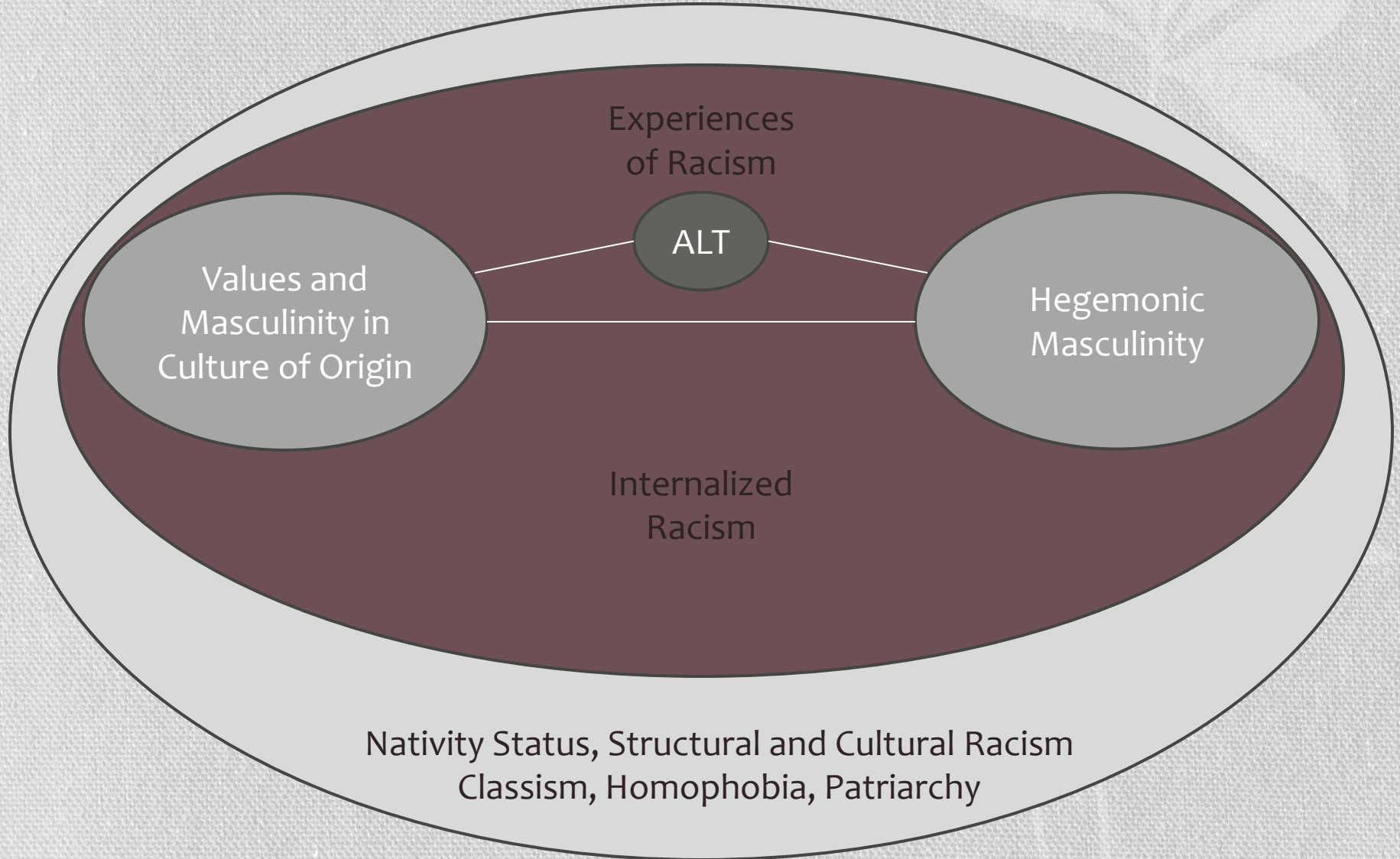- In What Ways Might These Masculinities Overlap and Conflict with Hegemonic Masculinity?

(Un)Conscious Negotiation of Masculinities: Cultural and Internal Conflicts

Values and Masculinity in Culture of Origin

Hegemonic Masculinity

Negotiating Masculinities:
Cultural and Internal Conflicts

Experiences
of Racism

ALT

Values and
Masculinity in
Culture of Origin

Hegemonic
Masculinity

Internalized
Racism

Nativity Status, Structural and Cultural Racism
Classism, Homophobia, Patriarchy

Intersectionist Approaches:
Gendered Racism and Asian Americans

- Attributions Made of Asian American Men
  - Effeminate, Lacking Strength,
  - Not Virile or Sexual
  - Leadership Qualities
  - Bad Drivers
  - Foreigners

Do College Coeds and Asian Men Find Each Other Attractive? (…

White Girls Say the Funniest Things About Asian Men (Part 2 of 2)

Outcomes

- What are Potential Intermediate Outcomes?
  - Experience of Stress/Strain: Threat to Sense of Self as an Asian American Man
    - Physical and Sexual Prowess
    - Questions Self as a Social Being
    - Pressures to Succeed Academically
- What are Potential Long Term Outcomes
  - It is domain specific but a person could experience any combination of the three:
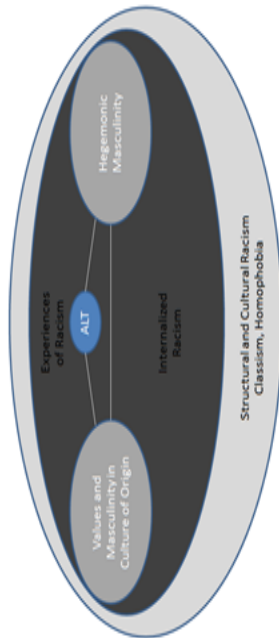   - Growth
    - No Change
    - Dysfunction

Individual Responses to Threats to Masculinity

- Works Harder to Demonstrate Masculinity in other Domains that are available in a Positive way.

- Lacking Social Support, He Isolates Self and turns Pain Inward.

- Reestablishes Masculinity by Exerting Power, Control, and Dominance at Home.

- Finds Communities in Which he is able to Demonstrate Masculinity

- Actively Protests Hegemonic Masculinity by creating alternate Masculinity.

- Ruminates over inability to measure up to Perceived Masculinity/or over conforming to stereotypes

A Multicultural Gender-Sensitive Stress Model

Treatment Considerations – Setting the Stage

- Setting the stage – explaining processes, enlisting strengths of men to motivate them to engage in counseling by collaborating to set goals;

- Being aware of own biases as clinician (how do Asian American men deal with emotion? Cultural transference);

- Remembering to validate clients' racism experiences;

- Inviting Asian Americans to talk about potential gender, cultural, or racial differences between counselor and client; and

- Stabilize client resources (if needed) and address concerns around safety.

Relational and Intersectionist Analysis

Use of "Evidence-Based Assessment" (Rabinowitz & Cochran, 2003) and race-based trauma interventions (Comas-Dias, in press) - modified

- Explore Relational Patterns and Challenges (within multiple systems)
- Learn more about gender and racial socialization experiences (listening for race-related trauma injury or gender role trauma strains)
- Understand and Normalize Breadth and Use of Coping Strategies
- Desensitization
- Reformulate meaning making of client.
- Unpack Awareness of and Acknowledgement of Racism and Gender Role Socialization (in context of cultural conflicts, social class, homophobia).
- Move toward Action

Small Group Work

- Discuss one of the Three Cases
  - What is the Role of Race, Gender, and Cultural Values in the Client's Presenting Issues?
  - What Biases might you guard against?
  - What has the client's coping strategy been? What has been useful? What has not?
  - What coping strategies (or tools) might you suggest?

Case Illustration I

Gerry is a 19 year old Vietnamese male who lives with his two roommates in an off-campus housing unit. His father is a chiropractor and his mother a dental hygienist. Gerry, who is of slight build and of average height, comes to counseling at the request of his mother, who has been worried about his loss of weight and his increasing bouts of angry outbursts.

In session, he describes how he has no friends and how he has never had a girlfriend. He explains that his grades, which were once straight A's, have dropped recently and that he feels very little motivation of late. No matter how hard he works no one notices him. In fact, he seems to think that his strong grades make him more of an outcaste and target for taunting. He desires an intimate relationship but feels unattractive. He is disappointed by his physical stature and appearance. He is doubtful of guys when they share their sexual exploits but still feels ashamed that he a virgin. He explains that he has a hard time even bringing himself to talk to girls – White or otherwise. He thinks that his being Vietnamese can be a good thing but that no one thinks of Vietnamese guys as "real" men.

Case Illustration II

Thompson is a 14 year Korean male who, along with this younger sister, was born in the United States. His parents, with whom he lives, immigrated here to seek a better life for themselves and for the children they planned to eventually have. The family is not religious but attends a church to be a part of the community and because of the benefits the networking provides. He shares that they are pretty traditional.

Thompson has self-referred for counseling at school, which is racially mixed. He reports feeling guilty and disgusted for having some passing thoughts about some other boys in class. He thinks other kids sense that he is a little different as they have made some comments about his being a "sissy." He has a few friends who he feels pretty close with. He doesn't know what their thoughts are about the teasing he gets but they defend him.

He also shares that since he was younger he felt pressure by his mother to eventually marry and to take care of her and her husband in their old age, as well as his own family. He knows that his parents sacrificed a lot and is sure that he will disappoint them both if he doesn't have children.

Conclusion

- Consider the Role of Gender Role Socialization, Cultural Values, and Racism in Experiences of Men and Women.

- Utilize culture-sensitive, race-sensitive, and gender-sensitive practices.

- Develop prevention programs in community to engage men in talking with younger men and about masculinity, cultural values, and racism.

- Questions and/or Comments?