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Beyond 'MSM': Sexual Desire Among Bisexually-Active Latino Men in New York City

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Abstract

Latino male bisexuality has been studied for the most part with a focus on men who have sex with men (MSM) and with little attention to sexual desire. The goal of this article is to present a comprehensive understanding of how sexual desire is organized, enacted through sexual activity, and interpreted in the sexual lives of bisexually-active Latino men. To achieve this aim, an analysis was made of 18 sexual histories of bisexually active Latino men who participated in a two-year ethnographic study. Four configurations of sexual desire were constructed to reflect what was found in this population of bisexually-active Latino men: (a) lifetime homoerotic desire and casual sex with women; (b) lifetime heteroerotic desire, but commercial sex with men; (c) lifetime heteroerotic/transgender desire; (d) lifetime sexual desire for women and men. These configurations are explored in detail in this article. The analysis presented here is intended to offer insights into the overall study of Latino male bisexuality and into the foundations for the design of HIV and STI prevention programs directed toward bisexually-active Latino men and their partners.

Keywords

bisexuality; Hispanic; HIV/AIDS; Latinos; MSM

Introduction

Since the late 18th century, bisexuality has been problematic for the conceptualization of theories on sexuality. This conflict stems from the notion that bisexuality is an indicator of arrested psychosexual development leading to homosexuality, or results from homosexual repression that occurs during the developmental process (e.g. Cass, 1979), or simply reflects individuals in denial of their homosexual orientation. An opposing view has arisen from social research since the late 1970s, which demonstrates that bisexuality is a valid category with its own developmental process (Firestein, 1996; Fox, 1996; Hemmings, 2002; Rodríguez-Rust, 2000a; Troiden, 1988). With regard to bisexuality in general, we know a substantial amount about the development of bisexual identities and the psychosocial factors related to these identities (Brierley, 2000; Fox, 1996; Leland, 2000; Rodríguez-Rust, 2000b). But we have extremely limited understanding of Latino male and female bisexuality, in particular. For example, in an analysis of non-clinical samples of self-identified bisexuals,

Fox (1996) found no evidence of psychopathology or psychological maladjustment and that bisexual individuals were characterized by: high self-esteem, self-confidence and autonomy, a positive self-concept independent of social norms, high assertiveness and cognitive flexibility.

None the less, we have limited understanding of the interconnection between identity, desire, and sexual practices, particularly among ethnic minorities in the United States. An illustration of this can be found in the group of typologies illustrated by Fox (1995) in his analysis. One of those typologies that Fox (1995) documented has been labeled 'Latin Bisexuality' indicating: 'male individuals who take only the inserter role in anal or oral sex with another male, and consider themselves heterosexuals'. This typology clearly represents a particular (stereotypical) behavioral dimension and does not account for the complexities of Latino male bisexuality. It is precisely the aim of investigation for this article to have a comprehensive understanding about the multiple dimensions of bisexuality among Latino men. The specific objectives of this paper are to map out how Latino male bisexuality has been approached in the United States and to examine the interconnections between sexual desire, practices, and identity for bisexually-active Latino men.

Approaches to the study of Latino male bisexuality in the United States

The history of the study of Latino male bisexuality in the United States and in Latin America is profoundly impacted by the emergence of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Prior to AIDS, Latino male bisexuality was rarely a topic of investigation in the United States, and research on the area emerged from the works of social scientists in Latin America. This continues to be true even today.

Bisexuality itself has not been widely studied in Latin America, but it has been a key element of analysis on masculinity and sexuality studies since the mid-1970s (e.g. Taylor, 1978). To highlight the main findings of this body of literature, the author will briefly discuss the findings from studies in Mexico, Dominican Republic, and Brazil.

From the early 1970s, Taylor (1978) and Carrier (1995) found that the system of categorizing the homosexual experience among Mexican men is determined by whether individuals assume male-female roles during sexual activity. For example, men who assume a feminine role by being penetrated during anal sex are considered 'maricones', and are heavily stigmatized, while those who are 'mayates' (penetrators) are given a non-stigmatized identity. Like Carrier's (1995) work on Mexican men, De Moya and Garcia (1996) found a similar relationship between masculinity and bisexuality in the context of the Dominican Republic. They wrote about the 'enigma of bisexuality' and concluded that bi-eroticism, bisexual behavior, and bisexuality seem to be associated with the social construction of masculinity and gender-role relationships among many Dominican males (e.g. a man is a man even if he has sex with another man as long as he is the one penetrating and not assuming the passive role).

Carrillo (1999) and Liguori et al. (1996) also observed how traditional gender role-based interpretations of the homo-bi-sexual experience documented by Carrier (1995) and by Taylor (1978) still serve as sources of meaning, identity, and stigma among many Mexican

men. The above findings seem to indicate strong similarities with the ‘Latin bisexuality’ typology. However, Carrillo (2002) found that these gender-role based traditional systems of categorizing the male sexual experience coexist with new ideologies and interpretations that result in the adoption of new sexual identities in the case of Mexican men. He found that these new sexual identities are more politically and ethnically based than gender role-based sexual identities and that the emergence of these new identities seems to be related to cultural and political changes in Mexican society. These cultural-political changes result from the mobilization and larger representation of AIDS, gay and feminist movements’ media representation of the homoerotic.

Parker (1991, 1996, 1999) has also conducted one of the most extensive series of studies in the area of male sexuality in Brazil. Parker has documented how male sexuality, in the Brazilian context, is primarily focused on activity and passivity as key coordinates of the sexual universe; the object (whether male or female) of one’s sexual desire may be less significant in the subjective construction of one’s sexual identity – that is, the role performed in one’s sexual interactions. However, he argues that such elements are not the only influence of the construction of the sexual experience. He argues that a relatively high erotic value is placed upon a certain flexibility in sexual encounters, a willingness to transgress rules and prohibitions. He also argues that sexual identity may be situationally contingent; depending on the circumstances, one sexual identity may be chosen over others. Furthermore, Parker (1999) describes how traditional gender-based systems of organizing the homo-bi-sexual experience have been changing in Brazil due to the impact of science and medicine in response to the AIDS pandemic (i.e. the rationalization of homosexuality and bisexuality as distinct, new sexual identities in the Brazilian context), and as a consequence of the increasing emergence of distinct cultures or subcultures organized around an understanding of homoerotic desire.

The works just mentioned, together with research from other parts of Latin America – Ramirez (1999) in Puerto Rico; Lancaster (1992, 1997) in Nicaragua; Caceres (1996, 1999) in Peru; Schifter in Costa Rica (Schifter, 2000; Schifter et al., 1996), among others – demonstrate the conceptualization of bisexuality beyond the passive–active paradigm to include the influence of culture, economics, and social structures in the formulation of bisexual practices, desire, and self-identification. This study draws upon the theoretical tools of this body of literature, but it is also important to acknowledge that the primary attention to bisexuality in the studies just mentioned was on homoerotic desire and practice, and only limited attention was given to sex with and desire for women.

The literature on bisexuality and homosexuality in Latin America during the emergence of the AIDS epidemic, together with key studies of Latino and African American male sexuality, and paired with strong advocacy to de-stigmatize AIDS in the United States, have had a profound impact on the way homosexuality and bisexuality have been studied in the public health discourse.

By the late 1980s, research on homosexually and bisexually active Latinos indicated that the familiar categories of sexual orientation were culturally specific and could not be imposed on Latinos in the United States without creating misnomers (Almaguer, 1993; Alonso and

Koreck, 1989; Carballo-Diequez and Dolezal, 1994; Carballo-Diequez et al., 1997; Carballo-Diequez et al., 2000; Diaz, 1998; Murray, 1995). Central to this argument was the notion that western discourse of sexuality has stigmatized ‘others’ and legitimized their subordination (Alonso and Koreck, 1989).

In response to this type of concern, agencies involved with HIV/AIDS prevention implemented the epidemiological-behavioral category ‘MSM’ (men who have sex with men), which has been used to replace the concept of a high-risk group. This categorization has been invaluable in reducing the stigma attached to labeling individuals as high-risk, and it allows for the accurate focus on ‘risk practices’. The problem with the MSM category is that many men do not identify with this label, which leads to their increased alienation from HIV prevention strategies (Diaz, 1998; Male-branche, 2003). Moreover, by imposing this category or developing programs under this framework, the behavioral dominance may exclude key elements of the erotic-sexual interaction, such as sex with women, which are critical to the main aim of the MSM approach – HIV/STI (sexually transmitted infections) prevention for bisexually-active Latino men and their partners.

Thus, we need to move beyond MSM if we want to have a better understanding of Latino male bisexuality. For this reason, the author conducted an ethnographic study of the interconnection between sexual desire, practices, and reflections of bisexually-active Latino men in New York City.

Research methodology

Study population

‘Latino’ and ‘bisexual’ do not refer to universally accepted, precisely defined concepts. For this reason, these terms were operationalized for the purposes of this study.

Traditionally, the term ‘bisexual’ refers to an individual who is either sexually or emotionally attracted to, or sexually intimate with, members of both sexes (Kinsey and Pomeroy, 1945; Maguen, 1998). In this article, the term ‘bisexually-active’ refers to a person who has a history of bisexual experiences¹ and has engaged in a sexual encounter² at least once with each gender during the 24 months prior to the interview (definition adapted from Crawford, et al., 1996).

‘Latino’, in this article, refers to an individual of Latin American ancestry – someone whose birthplace, or that of his parents or grandparents, was in any territory of Latin America regardless of whether or not the respondent speaks Spanish or Portuguese. The heterogeneity behind the Latino identity (that is, the multiple cultural, political, economic, and historic

¹Bisexual history was not intended to be a rigid, standardized measure, but rather a guideline of past sexual history with male and female partners according to the age of the research informant. For example, by the age of 18, possible informants were expected to have experienced at least eight sexual encounters (four with male and four with female partners), but by the age of 30, the minimum number of encounters was 20 (10 with male and 10 with female partners).

²A sexual encounter refers to experiencing mutual masturbation (hand stimulation of the genitals, e.g. rubbing the penis, putting the fingers into the anus or vagina, or stimulating the clitoris), oral sex (putting or receiving the mouth or tongue on the genitals or breast/chest, e.g. sucking the penis, licking testicles, clitoris, vagina, anus, nipples, breasts, or chest), non-penetrative sex (putting and rubbing the penis between the thighs, buttocks, armpits, or breasts of another person), and/or sexual intercourse (putting or receiving the penis inside the anus/rectum, regardless of whether it was partial or full penetration and whether or not ejaculation took place).

backgrounds of Latinos) makes it almost conceptually impossible to make generalizations about all Latinos. Then, what is the rationale for using the Latino category at all? In this study, the intention was to employ the notion of Latino to capture the bisexual experiences of men of Latin American ancestry, whose major commonality is their socio-legal-political relationship with United States politics – a minority status, as classified within the dominant or hegemonic cultural system, which constitutes ethnicity in the United States.

Research design

With these conceptual definitions in mind, the author conducted a two-year ethnographic study with participants drawn predominantly from three neighborhoods of New York City.

- *Washington Heights* is a residential neighborhood in upper Manhattan, which is home to a large, multigenerational, predominantly working class, Dominican community. This community maintains strong ties to the Dominican Republic and remains the entry point for many new immigrants.
- *East Harlem* is one of the oldest Latino neighborhoods in New York City. This neighborhood is traditionally identified as Puerto Rican and is strongly associated with that community's *Nuyorican* cultural movement. In addition, it is home to immigrants from many other Central and South American countries and a large African-American contingent. East Harlem was severely affected by the crack epidemic of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The economic renewal that has transformed Central Harlem, creating gentrified, upper middle-class neighborhoods, also shifted the class profile of East Harlem, particularly along the East River and near the north-east corner of Central Park.
- *Jackson Heights* in Queens is one of the most economically vibrant neighborhoods outside of Manhattan. It is also one of the most diverse – home to large, very visible communities of South Asians, East Asians, Latinos, and Whites. Predominantly middle class, the real estate market in the neighborhood is swiftly becoming one of the most expensive in the borough. As is the case with neighborhoods that have experienced relatively recent economic change, vestiges of the older working class community remain – for the most part, Latino and East Asian. The area is also an important recreational center, with many restaurants, bars, and nightclubs, a number of which cater to a predominantly gay clientele. Rather than segregating along racial or ethnic lines, many of these establishments actively market themselves to the cultural mix in the area. Thus, it is possible to find Italian and Indian food in a restaurant or bar that plays a mixture of Latin, Rai and Bhangra music.

Ethnographic observations were conducted in male-centered social spaces (including bars, nightclubs, pizza parlors, street corners, and parks) in each of these geographical communities. In addition to these male-centered spaces, ethnographic observations were made of homoerotic spaces in these communities and in other neighborhoods, including *Chelsea*, the *West Village*, and the *South Bronx*. Most research informants were recruited while conducting ethnography in these spaces. Findings from ethnographic observations are

presented elsewhere (Muñoz-Laboy, 2003), while this article focuses on the sexual histories of bisexually-active Latino men within these spaces.

Sexual histories

Drawing from the works on life history research (e.g. Plummer, 1983), a sexual history in this study refers to the construction of a chronological narrative of the events in the sexual life of an individual and the perceptions, reactions, meanings, feelings, thoughts, and life events that surround that individual's sexual subjectivity (as described by Dowsett, 1996 and Weeks, 1986). The sexual history was based on an open-ended, in-depth interview of 90 to 120 minutes.

Eighteen bisexually-active Latino men participated in the sexual history interviews. A difficulty encountered was recruitment. Only 33 per cent (44/130) of the Latino men initially contacted participated in the screening interview. This could be considered a low rate of recruitment. Stigma ascribed to research study participation (as described by Dugan and Meyer-Bahlburg, 2003), lack of time, no desire to participate and so on, are some possible explanations for this. However, more than half of the men who were screened, 59 per cent (26/44), reported a history of bisexual activities and current bisexual activities (a key aspect of this study). Therefore, the low rate of recruitment was not a major limiting factor to research participation. Of those who qualified on the basis of both historical and current bisexual activity, the majority, 69 per cent (18/26), consented³ and participated in the sexual history interviews.⁴

Analysis of sexual histories

The author, together with an independent reviewer and senior researchers, coded and analyzed the transcripts of the sexual histories. This article is centered on analysis of sexual desire. The procedure for this analysis consisted of reading all the sexual histories and examining each one as a case study focused on the question: How is sexual desire configured in the context of sexual activity, sexual partnership, and social situations experienced by bisexually-active Latino men throughout the course of their lives? 'Sexual desire', in the analytical framework of this question, is not meant to refer to an 'appetite', a 'drive', or an 'outlet', but instead refers to one of the elements of the 'creation of the self' (Simon and Gagnon, 1999) of the 'sexual subject' (Weeks, 1986). Sexual desire is used, not as a measurable, categorizing instrument of analysis, but as an organizational element to facilitate the construction of 'useful typological groups' (Plummer, 1975), from which some generalizations about certain forms can be made.

³To protect informants' privacy and comply with human rights procedures, approval from the Columbia University Department of Psychiatry and the New York State Psychiatric Institute Institutional Review Board was obtained (IRB No. 3905). In addition, a Federal Certificate of Confidentiality was obtained for this study (No. MH-00-07, Expiration Date: 03-31-02).

⁴Depending on the convenience of research participants, the interviews took place at community organizations, our university offices, or at the homes of research participants. The participants received a monetary compensation for their time. The interviews were conducted in Spanish, English, or both, depending on the participant's choice. The interviews were taped and transcribed within two weeks from the day of the interview.

Research findings and discussion

Four configurations of sexual desire for male and female partners were found. A case study is presented as a point of departure for the analysis of each configuration. (Pseudonyms were used instead of the names of informants, sexual partners, relatives, social networks, locations, and other personal identifiers, in order to protect the confidentiality of research informants.)

Configuration A: Lifetime homoerotic desire/casual sex with women: The history of Kenneth

In the late 1970s, Juan Austero, Dominican, was living in New York when he met his neighbor, a young, recently immigrated Puerto Rican woman named Flor. Despite his married status, Mr Austero had a romantic affair with Flor for several years. Kenneth, my informant, was born of that relationship. His home was very strict and very Catholic. In his words: 'Anything sexual or anything homosexual was condemned.' In spite of the restrictiveness of his home, he managed to have an active sexual life.

Kenneth 'vividly' remembered how surprised he was the first time he 'came' (ejaculated), while watching his older brother's 'straight porn' when he was around 11 years of age. Soon after that experience, he experienced touching and being touched in the genitals, buttocks, and breasts for the first time. Some of these experiences were with his male school friends after gym in the lockers; others were with his female schoolmates.

One summer during junior high school, he had a more intimate sexual encounter. Kenneth, Martha (African-American schoolmate), and Omar (Latino schoolmate) were 'hanging out' and 'joking around' inside a classroom. Kenneth and Omar started 'teasing' Martha, and all of a sudden she 'took her shirt off' and challenged them to kiss her breasts. From Kenneth's account, Martha had 'really nice big breasts'. It was the first time he had actually seen a half-naked woman. Kenneth and Omar sucked Martha's breasts. Martha then requested that Kenneth show her his penis, and she performed oral sex on him. Omar did not receive oral sex, nor was he involved in any other activity. The three of them began 'giggling' and making jokes and then left the classroom to avoid being caught by a school official. For Kenneth, the experience of licking the breasts of a woman was 'scary'; he 'did not know what [he] was doing', and he had hoped she 'liked what he was doing'. This experience was isolated, and it was not until high school that he had other sexual experiences.

During this period of his life, Kenneth masturbated on a regular basis, while looking at heterosexual pornographic materials. He was curious about boys, but had little opportunity to have any sexual exploration with them. His family and social environment condemned and stigmatized same-sex sexual and emotional interactions, and Kenneth grew up with a fear of being attracted to other boys and men. This fear diminished after his senior year of high school.

Kenneth met Alicia (Caucasian, 'not too fat, not too skinny', 'long, blonde hair', 'nice blue eyes', and 'really big breasts') in a high school class. Alicia was the first woman with whom he had vaginal intercourse. Kenneth and Alicia became boyfriend and girlfriend during high

school, and one weekend when Alicia's parents were not home, they had vaginal intercourse and he performed oral sex on a woman for the first time. For both Kenneth and Alicia, this was their first sexual intercourse experience (he remembered using a condom on that first occasion). This was also the first time he performed oral sex on a woman (an experience that he 'did not particularly enjoy'). 'Doing it' (having vaginal intercourse) for the first time 'did not meet his expectations'; now he realizes that he 'finds with men that extra thing [he] was looking for'.

While Kenneth was with Alicia, he kissed a man on the mouth for the first time at a party during his senior year of high school. Kenneth was at the party 'checking out' a man. They went together to the bathroom. After urinating, the 'guy' came close to Kenneth who was 'nervous, but curious', and the 'guy' started kissing him. They touched and fondled each other, but were interrupted because someone walked into the bathroom. They never saw each other again. This experience confirmed Kenneth's desire and curiosity toward men, but it was not until his first year of college that he actively pursued same-sex sex. The relationship with Alicia ended when he moved to college; however, it has been on and off since then.

Kenneth met his current boyfriend Ray (African-American, with a 'very big cock', the same age, and 'handsome') during college:

In college, I met this man that I really liked, and I wanted to go up to him and ask if he was gay. And I went to his room, and he was, 'No, no, I'm not gay.' And then he was: 'How about you?' I was like, 'Will my answer change yours?' He was like, 'I don't know. Maybe.' I said, 'Okay, I'm bisexual'. He was like, 'I'm not anything.' And I looked at him and said, 'Are you sure?' He said, 'I'm bisexual, too.' And I was like, 'Cool.' And then we sat down and we started talking in his room, and he asked me if he could kiss me. And I said, 'Yeah, go ahead.' So, we started making out and I gave him a blow job, and that was the first time I ever gave a man a blow job.

Sexual activity with Ray was limited to oral sex and mutual masturbation. During fall break of his first year, Kenneth was staying at his mother's house while she was out of the state visiting a very ill relative. Kenneth's close friend, José (second generation Cuban, average looking, same age, heterosexual, high-school friend), came to visit Kenneth. They went to a bar for drinks and then went back to the house to watch 'straight porn':

He came to my house that day. We started jerking off, as usual. We always used to play around, like we used to cover our dicks. 'I don't want you to see it ... I don't want you to see my dick'. And he told me something. He was like, 'Why are you covering yours up when I have the same thing?' I was like, 'Oh, okay. You want to do that? So I took [the cover] off and we looked and jerked off. We finished, we cleaned up, and we went to bed. We slept in the same bed that night thinking that nothing was going to happen, but we started playing around. And I think I brushed his dick or something, and he really didn't say anything. I said, okay. I brushed it again. He didn't say anything. It seemed weird. So, I kept on and kept on, and one thing led to another, and I started giving him a blow job. And one thing led to

another, and we started having sex. And what was funny about it was that we were having sex, I was the bottom. And when I used to think about having sex – with men, that is – I never thought I would be the bottom. I thought, hell no. I never, ever, ever would be the bottom. He was definitely the top, because he had a lot more experience with girls. He was like he wanted to be on top. I was like, okay, whatever. While we're having sex, it was funny because I was telling him, 'Oh, nigger, hurry the fuck up, hurry the fuck up', because it was really painful and there wasn't any emotion or feeling, love between us, and there wasn't that much passion. One thing, he didn't want to kiss at all. I was like, okay. He came inside me and shit and that was it.

For Kenneth, this experience 'was horrible', it was 'painful as fuck'. Kenneth and José never had sex again, but kept their friendship. After this experience, Kenneth began to have anal sex with his boyfriend Ray. For Kenneth, that was a 'totally different experience', because there was love and passion between them. Kenneth describes himself as an 'active bottom'. He does 'all the work'. Ray is not as 'sexual' as Kenneth would want him to be, and that is his rationale for going after casual sex with other men and, when the opportunity is there, with other women, primarily because he likes 'the sensation of penetrating a vagina'. Besides Alicia (with whom he has sex 'once in a while'), women have not been so available to him because he does not want to 'date' or 'go that extra mile' often necessary to have sex with women. In other words, he does not 'stick to men'. If a woman wants to have a one-night stand with him, or a female friend wants to 'fuck', he does it 'without a problem'.

Currently, Kenneth is a non-married college student living on-campus and paying his studies through student loans and work. Kenneth seems to be a person who reflects frequently on his life and his sexuality. His sexual desire throughout his life seems to have been organized along the axis of gay versus straight desire. He said that when he was younger he had a 'fifty-fifty' desire for women and for men, and that, now, his desire is 'ten per cent' for women and 'ninety per cent' for men, but that his desire for women 'will never disappear'.

Kenneth's story represents one side of the narrative of bisexually active homoerotic desire – the young adult. However, similar to Kenneth's story are the life histories of men in this study who were older than Kenneth (in their mid-40s) and from other ethnic backgrounds (Mexican, Colombian, Cuban). Their life histories seemed to follow a path of sexual desire for women at first, but after experiencing same-gender sex, their desire 'gravitates' (in Kenneth's words) toward other men.

Men in this group often socialize with women. Some of them date and have social ties with women (e.g. marriage), but their sexual desire is primarily, if not exclusively, toward men. Sexual-social relationships with women are products of not wanting to 'let pass' an opportunity to have sex, flirting with women, or the 'natural thing to do'. However, for men with this configuration, it is fear of rejection (primarily by family) and actual incidences of rejection that have pushed these men to maintain a hetero-normative masculine image where it is imperative to avoid any homoerotic expression in the family social space. For some of the men in this group, their families know about their bisexuality, and the reactions range from full rejection of the bisexually-active man to a type of pseudo-tolerance along these

lines: ‘At least he [my son] is not gay. He is bisexual ... when are you going to give me grandchildren?’ [This is a quote from Luis (a study participant) repeating what his mother says on a regular basis].

All the men with this pattern privately consider themselves gay and/or bisexual. They will rarely disclose their sexual identity or homoerotic desire to women or relatives, but if they are ‘discovered’ and forced to disclose, they will identify as bisexual. This closely resembles the stereotype of ‘bisexuals being gay men in denial’. The author believes that this issue is more complicated than denial and internalized homophobia. On the one hand, the label ‘bisexual’, for men in this configuration, is often used to ameliorate families’ acceptance of homoerotic desire, because it leaves open the possibility of ‘switching back’ to a heterosexual life, getting married, and having children. This perpetuates the heterosexist value of living in silence for an individual who is not exclusively heterosexual. However, family relations are salient issues to Latinos in general, and therefore enacting homoerotic desire challenges the very core principle of heterosexuality that governs many Latino cultures, creating a great deal of anxiety for men in this group.

Furthermore, the act of disclosing oneself as ‘gay’ is specific to culture and social class (e.g. Dowsett, 2003; Malebranche, 2003); therefore, classifying men in this configuration as ‘gay men in denial’ creates further stigma and alienation. But the central question to this discussion is how disclosing as ‘gay’ or living a ‘gay lifestyle’ will have an effect on bisexual desire? Two of our participants (in this configuration) who self-identified as gay and who live with their boyfriends, continue to have erotic-sexual interactions with women (mostly heterosexual women, but also self-identified lesbian and bisexual women), but never disclose these sexual activities to their boyfriends or other ‘gay’ friends.

Disclosure of sexual desire and identity, masculinity, and heterosexism are among the main social elements framing the ways in which men with a lifetime homoerotic desire interpret and organize their bisexual activities. In the next configuration, the social structure of the informal economy in the inner city plays a key role in framing bisexual desire for a subgroup of Latino men.

Configuration B: Lifetime heteroerotic desire/commercial sex with men: The history of Oscar

In contrast with Kenneth’s history, there seems to be a group of bisexually-active Latino men whose sexual desire tends to move toward women and whose sexual encounters with men center around the exchange for drugs and money. This is the case of Oscar.

Oscar has participated in sex work for more than a decade. He works different streets in midtown and downtown Manhattan, looking for male clients. Oscar and the author met through street outreach. Oscar is mid-40s, second generation Puerto Rican. He grew up in a poor home in the Bronx. His father and extended family raised Oscar (since his mother passed away when he was 10). He had six siblings, three of whom died (two were killed and one died from AIDS-related illnesses). Oscar is HIV positive. He is not a very talkative man.

At age 13, three years after Oscar dropped out of school (fifth grade) he had his first sexual experience with a girl (a 15-year-old, African-American neighbor). They went to the roof of his building where they were ‘making out’, and then he ‘fucked her’. She had a skirt on, and he pulled aside her underwear and put his penis inside her. He ejaculated inside her. Since then, he has frequently been sexually active with women, including girlfriends, friends, acquaintances, but primarily with his ‘shooting’ (intravenous drug user) friends. Oscar has never been married. In the past year, he had sex with two women. One of them, Jenn, is a ‘kind of a girlfriend’. Jenn is HIV positive and also a drug user. They never use condoms because ‘they do not like’ condoms, and she ‘cannot get pregnant anyway’. The last time they had sex was the weekend before the interview (they had vaginal and anal intercourse, and he ejaculated inside her anus). Oscar was very vague in terms of his feelings toward Jenn. (In fact, Oscar was a willing interviewee who enjoyed providing facts and describing experiences, but he was very reticent about revealing thoughts and feelings during the interview.)

Oscar has been in and out of prison on more than 10 occasions since the age of 16, convicted on charges of stealing, armed robbery, trespassing, drug possession, and physical assault. Oscar has been using heroin, cocaine, and marijuana since he was 18 years old. In the past month, he smoked marijuana and injected and sniffed heroin almost every day. He also used cocaine, crack, speedball (heroin mixed with cocaine), and alcohol almost once a week. The last time he was in jail, in 1991 when he spent two consecutive years there, he got tested for HIV for the first time and the result was positive. Since then, he had tested positive with every blood exam he had taken. He believes he got infected with HIV by sharing contaminated needles.

His sexual experiences with men began when he was 23 as the result of his ‘need for money’. This started in the late 1970s when he found a job showing his penis in a peepshow on 42nd Street. Clients of the peepshow gave him extra money for sucking his penis. He ‘liked’ that, ‘getting head and getting money too’. During the periods of time when he was in jail, his sexual experiences primarily included masturbation, but on some occasions he had the ‘chance to fuck some guys’. After that, he began to find clients in the streets and in nightclubs and began ‘fucking’ them in exchange for money and/or drugs. As time passed, his body changed, too. Now, he does not have a ‘good body’, and it is more difficult to get clients. In the month prior to the interview, he had been ill, so he only had one male client. Five years before that was the last time he ‘fucked’ a client without a condom.

While men such as Kenneth (in the first configuration) were extremely preoccupied with maintaining a heteronormative, masculine identity, this was not an issue for men like Oscar. Oscar considers himself a ‘straight man’. For him, that means to be ‘a man’, ‘a macho type’, ‘being tough’, and ‘being respected’; the opposite of ‘walking like a sissy’ and ‘acting like women’. Oscar has two friends who are also straight, but who have sex with men. They all go together to the Village to ‘hang out’ and get clients. Sometimes, while he is in the Village, he considers himself bisexual, but most of the time in and outside the Village, he feels like a ‘man’. Being a man for Oscar is very important. He is a ‘man’ in all other aspects of his life. His masculinity is not threatened by having sex with both women and men (as long as he is the insertive actor).

For men like Oscar, sexual desire is organized around competing desires that seem to follow a hierarchical order: at the primary level is the desire for drugs and for the means to obtain those (including sex work); at a second level is his desire for sex with female partners (which he has actively sought throughout his life); and a third level is his desire for sex with male partners (which he passively acknowledges in his narrative). In summary, bisexual activity for Oscar is a way of satisfying these three levels of desire.

Does this configuration consist primarily of lifetime heteroerotic desire and secondary homoerotic desire, or is it simply a configuration of its own, driven by commercial sex? The author tends to agree with the latter interpretation. This pattern of sexual desire is similar to what Fox (1995) called ‘technical bisexuality’. This is experienced when homosexual behavior occurs as part of male or female prostitution. However, Oscar’s history exemplifies a particular sector of bisexually active Latino men: drug users–sex workers. To understand sexual desire in this configuration, we need to conceptualize the body as the source of deployment of competing desires (sexual and non-sexual) and as the source of structural struggles: adapting to a dominant culture and ethnic marginalization (discrimination); economic exclusion (through lack of educational opportunities and limited employment options); the epidemic of drugs such as heroin and crack in inner-city communities during the 1980s and early 1990s and the participation in the informal sector (sex work, property crimes and so on) as a way of economic survival.

Configuration C: Lifetime heteroerotic/transgender desire: The history of Moncho

Moncho was less than a year old when he moved from Puerto Rico to live with his parents in New York City. He grew up in a Catholic, working middle-class home (both parents worked in factories or similar types of job). Moncho considered himself as a ‘very sexually curious child’. His first sexual experience happened one night in Papitin’s (close male friend, same age, of Afro-Caribbean ancestry) house, when he was 14 years old. That night, while they were playing, wrestling in the bedroom, they became sexually aroused. They continued wrestling as they were playing, then they got naked and went into the closet. There, Moncho went behind Papitin and thrust his penis between Papitin’s buttocks, while simultaneously rubbing Papitin’s penis like he was ‘milking a cow’. Moncho ejaculated between Papitin’s legs, and Papitin ejaculated in Moncho’s hands.

From this experience with Papitin until the age of 19, most of Moncho’s sexual experiences were with other male youths and men that he met in the West Village where he ‘got a lot of blow jobs and hand jobs’. During this period, his experiences with women were limited to a lesbian friend who ‘made out’ with him on one occasion. That was the first time he kissed a woman. Up to that point in his life, Moncho’s sexual desire was primarily toward men, and, although his sexual curiosity for women was present, it was ‘more easy to get a man’ than to ‘get together’ with a woman. He did not consider himself gay, but simply a ‘man’.

This changed at the age of 19 when he experienced anal and vaginal intercourse for the first time. While ‘cruising’, as he usually did, in the park, Moncho came across a man (white, older than him), and instead of getting a ‘hand job’ (masturbation) or a ‘blow job’ (fellatio), though he could not remember how he ended up penetrating this man, he ‘immediately came’ (ejaculated) into his anus. Even though this was his first anal intercourse experience,

he considered it ‘meaningless’ and ‘nothing of the other world’. Soon after that, Moncho had an experience that transformed his life. He had vaginal intercourse for the first time. Sandra was a friend of his family (Puerto Rican, 35 years old):

Well, I always knew her. She was really pretty. Nice breasts, a nice ass, and I guess one day she finally saw how big I had grown up. One day we were in my sister’s bedroom. We were talking and flirting. She sort of seduced me, in a way, and gave me the green sign that it’s okay to walk in. She basically just grabbed me and she was like manhandling me. She was aggressive. So she just took it and I let her. She went on top. She knew what she was doing. She was with a man before me for over ten years. They broke a year or so. So we started fucking and she got pregnant the first two weeks we were together.

After Sandra announced her pregnancy to Moncho, the two of them moved in together for two years and broke up approximately a year after the birth of a daughter. This was the first child for either of them. Throughout the pregnancy and during the last year of living together, Moncho and Sandra had sex ‘frequently’. He was very ‘happy’ with their sexual interaction. He said that he learned ‘a lot’ during those two years in the sexual as well as other aspects of his life. At the end of these two years, they were ‘having a lot of problems’, and he decided to move out. They kept a close relationship for four years, but she and his daughter relocated to another part of the country and have not spoken to each other since then.

After moving from Sandra’s apartment, Moncho (21 years old) had sex with a ‘drag queen’ for the first time. Alexa was Puerto Rican, 40 years old, and Moncho met him on a summer day in a public pool. They went to Alexa’s apartment:

She knew I didn’t know she was a drag queen. So she was real gentle with me. She sat me in her house first and started talking. It was almost like a counseling session, as far as I can remember now. She just kept asking me questions of different topics. Did I know what this was? Did I know what that was? She came to the last question, which was do I know what a transsexual is? When she got to that question, it startled me a bit, and then my mind all of a sudden went to the pool where everybody was telling me ‘That’s a man.’ And the last vivid word of transsexual I can remember was a man. I said, ‘Yeah, is that what you are?’ I said it just like that. She said, ‘Yes.’ I said, ‘Oh.’ She said, ‘Do you care?’ I said, ‘No, I don’t care.’ So, from right there and then, she gave me a blow job there, touching her titties and stuff like that.

The experiences between Sandra and Alexa deeply transformed his sexual desire. From this point on, he never again had any sexual interaction with ‘masculine’ men. His desire from that point to the present (31 years old) was for women. For him, women were: ‘born women’ (biological females who assume women’s heteronormative social roles); ‘transsexual women’ (biologically male, but phenotypically female, who assume women’s heteronormative social roles); and ‘drag queens’ (biologically and phenotypically male who assume women’s heteronormative social roles and ‘dress and behave like women’). This pattern maintained itself even when Moncho was confined to an exclusively ‘masculine men’ environment. Moncho (23 years old) spent six months in prison for a minor crime that

allegedly he did not commit. While in prison, his sexual experience was limited to self-masturbation. There, he learned about HIV and was tested for the first time. The results came out negative (three years prior to the interview, he was tested again, also with negative results).

In the year prior to the interview, Moncho (now 31 years old) had sex with only two people – Martha and Selena. Martha was in her 30s, Puerto Rican, and married with two children. Martha and Moncho were neighbors, and they commuted on the same train. They became friends and flirted frequently on the train. One evening, she came to Moncho's house and 'just threw herself' at him, and they 'started fucking'. The relationship lasted for three months, and Moncho decided to end it because it was 'bothering him psychologically'. He felt guilty about the affair, because Martha was married and Moncho had been in a long-term relationship for quite some time with Selena.

Selena (Nicaraguan, 36 years old at the time of the interview) had been Moncho's partner for the past four years. Selena had an 'Asian look', 'beautiful hair', and a 'guitar-shaped body'. (She also had breasts, testicles, and a penis.) They met in a nightclub in Manhattan: '... we just kicked off right there, a lot of kissing on the spot. She took me to her house and gave me a blow job. After a few times, I had intercourse with her'.

They lived a 'heterosexual lifestyle' (in Moncho's words, he was the 'husband' and Selena was the 'wife'). Their sex life consisted of oral sex (where Moncho gives and receives oral sex), mutual masturbation, mutual anal fingering, and insertive anal intercourse (where Moncho penetrates her). They had their own separate houses, but they 'practically' lived together. Moncho was in love with Selena at the time of the interview. She could and did fulfill all aspects of his life but could not give him children, and that was his major frustration with their relationship.

Similar to Kenneth, Moncho was very concerned with maintaining a heteronormative, masculine identity. For example, Moncho had been in fights (in public spaces) defending Selena and other women partners from harassment and pejorative comments against his 'drag queen' partners. Gender roles, particularly those of women, which dictate that individuals are 'expected to do this' or 'behave like that', and that men 'do not behave like women', are extremely important to Moncho's sexuality. His sexual partners have to be 'women', regardless of their biological sex.

In analyzing Moncho's case, two important questions are considered first: can a man with a sexual desire similar to Moncho's be interpreted as a having heterosexual desire with an open definition of womanhood? or does the fact that desired partners are biologically male automatically imply a bisexual desire? These questions were not posed to Moncho, but he offered some insights during his interview. From his perspective, he lives an 'ideal bisexual life', in which he can consolidate 'the best of two worlds'. This is somewhat contradictory inasmuch as social aspects of masculinity (such as manliness, as used by Fuller, 2001) are excluded in the conjunction of these two worlds. For men like Moncho, there is only one man in the relationship, and that is himself (e.g. consider his answer about receptive anal intercourse: 'I don't do that ... I cannot get fucked ... I cannot be the woman'). The phrase,

‘the best of the two worlds’, seems to refer to the anatomical combination of male and female bodies and to the fact that, for Moncho, his biologically-male women partners bring knowledge to the sexual act that increases his sexual satisfaction (e.g. Moncho says ‘The best things about drag queens is that they know the male body well, and they really know how to please you’).

Certainly, Moncho’s trajectory is not a generalized pathway for men with sexual desire for transgender males. Men in this configuration have a strong affinity for the female body, the anatomical male-female body, and the hegemonic value of heterosexuality and normative masculinity. Such affinities become critical elements in the organization of desire and the selection of sexual partners for these men. Adherences to heteroerotic desire (as is the case for Moncho) or to almost exclusive homosexuality (as is the case for Kenneth) are norms that are completely transgressed by the men in the next configuration.

Configuration D: Lifetime sexual desire for women and men: The history of Esteban

Since very early in his life, Esteban was attracted to boys and girls, but he does not recall when those sexual feelings began. Esteban grew up in a very conservative, Protestant, religious, working-poor home, where boys were encouraged to participate constantly in sports, and sexual topics were prohibited in the household. This background profile is not only similar across all the cases presented in this article, but also among all members of the study sample.

Esteban kissed someone on the mouth for the first time when he was in second grade (seven years old). Her name was Brenda (Italian-American; green eyes; long, brown hair with highlights; thin; and ‘really pretty’). She was his classmate and neighbor. Brenda and Esteban ‘went out on and off’ during junior high and high school. Brenda and Esteban’s sexual experiences never went beyond kissing, hugging, holding hands, fondling her breasts, and embracing each other. They were ‘good friends’, and Esteban felt a lot of respect for her.

At the age of 12, Esteban considered himself to be a very ‘innocent person’ with regard to sexual thoughts and sexuality. He masturbated for the first time, soon after learning about it from friends. Later that year, he was playing ‘spin the bottle’ with his male friend who was similar in age. At first, Esteban did not want to play, but his friend insisted. As part of the game, his friend licked Esteban’s penis and scrotum. Esteban became frightened and stopped for a while. Then, they began again, this time ‘acting like [they] were having sex but with [their] clothes on’. Esteban was unable to accept the idea that he was participating in such behavior. His reaction was, ‘Oh my God! What am I doing!’ Esteban did not want to appear to be ‘gay’. At that time, he already knew what ‘gay’ meant. He had an older cousin who was gay, and he ‘didn’t want to come off like that’. The game with his friend ended when Esteban ejaculated in his underwear. Nothing else ever happened between Esteban and this friend.

Esteban’s sexual experiences intensified once he entered the seventh grade where he met Dina (another seventh grader, Italian-American, ‘not so pretty’). One day, they were ‘making out’ (kissing and fondling with their clothes on) in the school building, and he

‘fingered her a little bit’ (this was the first time that he had touched a clitoris and a vagina). During that same year, Esteban was introduced to Bruce (Puerto Rican, a year younger than Esteban), who would become a very significant friend. At one time, Esteban had a big ‘crush’ on Bruce. Esteban would ‘jerk off’, imagining having sex with Bruce, and did this for years though the fantasy never materialized.

Esteban’s second major ‘crush’ was Isabel (16 years old, a schoolmate, Italian-American). They ‘went out’ all through high school. One day at a party in his house, Esteban and Isabel had intercourse for the first time:

Isabel and I went upstairs to a bedroom. We were kissing and we were getting into it, and I started feeling her up, feeling her breasts, and I went down and was touching her down there. And then I started taking off her panties little by little. The shoes came off, the socks came off, and at first I thought she was going to stop me. She didn’t. So, when I realized she wasn’t going to stop me, that’s when I started unzipping my pants. She started going down on me, and that just sent me off the edge, and I said, all right. I picked her up and just started having sex without a condom. And, I’m just trying to think, the whole time I was having sex with her, the things that were going through my mind were, oh my God, am I doing this right? Why isn’t she stopping me? This is supposed to be her first time? You know, she was more into it than I was. She wanted to. I was too scared to really think about enjoying it at the time, until the end when I busted my nut and that was it. We got up and cleaned up, and she got dressed, I got dressed, and we went back downstairs. And she was like, she couldn’t believe that it just happened. I could not believe it just happened ... we just laughed about it afterwards, and after that I just wanted to keep having more and more sex with her. So we did. We did a lot. We practiced sex a lot.

Esteban ejaculated on her stomach. He ‘was too scared to think about getting her pregnant’. He says that he ‘wasn’t ready for it [becoming a father] at all’, and that ‘at least’ he ‘was smart enough to know to pull out before coming’. This experience was very significant and troublesome for Esteban. He did not believe that Isabel was a ‘virgin’ on their first sexual encounter, because she did not ‘bleed or anything’ and ‘she was very into it’. Eventually they got into a ‘big fight’ about it. The relationship with Isabel lasted for two and a half years. It ended as the result of Esteban’s dissatisfaction with several aspects of their relationship. The most significant of these was Esteban’s perception that Isabel’s family rejected him and that they treated him like a ‘Puerto Rican and poor’.

Immediately following high school, Brenda (the first person Esteban had kissed, mentioned earlier) and he tried dating again. But Esteban explained that the feelings in the relationship had changed:

I knew she already had sex with someone else, and I already had sex with somebody else ... and we both knew it. So it already killed it, that whole feeling of being together and it being right wasn’t there.

Esteban and Brenda dated for a short period of time and never engaged in any sexual activity besides kissing, hugging, and holding hands. Now, Brenda is married, has a child, and is pregnant. They communicate once in a while via e-mail.

Two years after high school, when Esteban was 20 years old, he had anal intercourse with a man for the first time. The man's name was Ricardo (Brazilian, 26 years old). They met in a gay club that Esteban went to with a close female friend. That night, Ricardo gave Esteban a ride, and they stopped at Ricardo's place:

He was showing me his music equipment ... So, he's behind me, kissing up on my neck, and I already knew at that time what I wanted. So we got into it. We went on his bed and we started ... he went down on me. I went down on him, for the first time ever, on anybody. And then, I ended up fucking him. We were completely naked, and I ended up having sex with him. And I loved it. The feeling that was going through my mind, I knew it was different than that first time with my ex-girlfriend. And I was comparing, as I'm having sex with him, oh my God, it's different. It is so much better. More relaxed, and, you know, it was only comparing the first time with each. Because now, today, I can honestly say that it really doesn't matter.

A critical age for Esteban was 21 when he told his lifetime best friend that he had a 'crush' on him. Bruce did not receive this information well. He felt betrayed and confused, and decided to stop talking to Esteban. Esteban went into a period of depression (not clinically diagnosed). Six or seven months later, Bruce started speaking to him again, and the friendship was re-established.

From the age of 21 to the present, Esteban has had several sex and love affairs with men and with women. In the last year prior to the interview, Esteban (26 years old) had six romantic/sexual affairs: two one-night stands with partners he met in a nightclub in Queens; two casual relationships with male friends he hangs out with; Christopher (a 24-year-old he met in a nightclub in Queens and has been dating for a few months immediately preceding the interview; and Jessica (a 24-year-old woman Esteban met in a class and dated for two months). Interestingly, none of these partners was bisexual, and all of them were Puerto Rican. However, for Esteban, being Puerto Rican and/or non-bisexual did not play a role in the selection of his partners; it 'just happened in that way'.

Ideally, Esteban would like to 'have both a man and a girl', but for him, this is not a realistic goal. He said that he feels that society pressures him to make a decision about which preference to have, but that he does not 'want to choose'. He just wants 'honest sex'. This means (in his words) that 'everybody knows what is going on'. However, he believes there is a difference in the way he experiences sex with male and female partners:

Because one gives me more than the other ... women ... I get a different feeling from women. It's more of a meaningful thing. With men, it's about literally getting a piece of ass that's quicker. I can easily get up, I go down to the Village, I walk around for a couple of minutes, and I find somebody. That's how easy it is. With girls, it's not that easy. So, it's always a thing where it's easy to have sex with a man because you can get it just by going downtown and looking for it and walking

around for a little bit and watching who looks at you. But, with girls, you have to work it out, you have to get to know them, you have to take them out, you have to spend some money on them. With guys, you don't have to spend money on them. You just have sex. Unless you're looking for a hustler.

Other men in this configuration have different emotional ties to their female and male partners. (Some 'fall in love' with or 'feel more' toward men only, or toward women only, while others do not care about the gender.) But the two strong similarities across the population of men in this configuration are: the extensive history of sexual desire for both male and female partners, which seems to have minor fluctuations throughout their young and adult lives; and sexual identities that capture the flexibility of their sexual desire. For example, Esteban does not consider himself gay or straight. He sees himself as a 'man' who is 'sexually diverse':

I came with this answer when the other day a couple of friends and I were talking about this kind of stuff. Sexually diverse means that it doesn't matter who you are having sex with. It's just ... I don't separate the sexes is what I want to say. I don't hold any boundaries. I am also 'trysexual' ... I'm willing to 'try' anything except animals and dead people and children.

Men like Esteban can be perceived as part of a more 'contemporary' type of bisexuality, which is the historical product of the social space that has been opened up for sexual diversity by gay, lesbian, and queer movements. An alternative argument would suggest that men like Esteban are part of a type of bisexuality, which has always been there, but, because it is characterized by its fluidity and lack of political involvement, remains silent. The evidence suggests that this silence is a product of generalized lack of acceptance of bisexuality in Latino cultures and in society at large. It is also a less politicized sexuality that juxtaposes binary expressions of sexuality. At the same time, it is a phenomenon more complex than simply an 'exploratory bisexuality period'. Men in this configuration reported long-term sexual desire and experiences with both men and with women.

Finally, an important question in this type of analysis concerns how many individuals fell into each of these configurations and how representational the configurations are. The distribution was as follows: configurations A, B, C, and D were six, two, two, and eight, respectively, for a total of 18 sexual histories. None the less, this was an ethnographic study, and its goal was not to be representational, but exploratory. Therefore, the numbers in each category are irrelevant to the main arguments of this article.

Conclusions

Latino male bisexuality has been traditionally understudied in the United States, outside of the realm of HIV prevention research. As a result, the MSM framework has dominated the approaches and interpretations of bisexuality among Latino men. This leaves us with an incomplete narrative of Latino male bisexuality that focuses on the behavioral dimension of the same-sex interaction. By analyzing sexual desire among bisexually-active Latino men, four configurations of desire were constructed. These are not the only patterns of desire of bisexually-active Latino men. For example, men who mostly have desire for women and

occasionally have sex with men was not a configuration represented in this study, given the difficulties of recruiting men who conform to this pattern of desire. Therefore, these findings represent ‘ideal types’ (as used by Weber, 1969), i.e. there may be other configurations that would emerge from other data sets of bisexually-active Latino men.

The configurations constructed on the basis of findings in this study, however, demonstrate that:

1. Latino MSM is far from being a homogeneous sexual category, and, as a framework, it is insufficient to capture the multidimensional aspects of Latino male bisexuality;
2. in spite of the stereotypes of Latino bisexual men (e.g. ‘repressed’ or ‘closeted’ gay men, ‘tops’ or insertive during anal intercourse), men like those in this study do not necessarily conform to these stereotypes, and, for that reason, the analysis of sexual desire makes it possible for us to deconstruct societal misrepresentations of bisexually-active Latino men;
3. contrary to what others have argued (e.g. Zinik, 2000), sexual desire in men like those in this study is tied to the gender of the object of desire, on the eroticization of gender differences and similarities in phenotypical males and females, as well as in the social constructs of being women and men.

Furthermore, these patterns point to the need for a closer examination of how culture (in the form of heterosexism and hegemonic masculinity) and social positioning (in the form of social class and hierarchy in the social milieu) influence the ways individuals organize their sexual desire. These reflections and decisions about desire have profound practical implications for the sexual lives of bisexually-active Latino men, including implications about risk of HIV infection. Thus, HIV prevention programs need to be tailored appropriately to adapt to the sexual diversity and sexual fluidity of groups such as bisexually-active Latino men. A helpful response might be to conceptualize HIV prevention strategies, not under static models of sexuality such as MSM, but to move for the exploration of strategies that integrate the fluidity and dynamic nature of sexual desire. Perhaps a category labeled ‘bisexually active’ (as well as homosexually and heterosexually active) may also prove insufficient to achieve this goal. Additional research is needed on the interconnection between sexual diversity and masculinity among Latinos, in the hope of contributing to larger projects, such as the study of Latino sexuality and the control of the spread of HIV and sexually transmitted infections in ethnic minority communities in the United States.

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