



# **Male Narratives in the Midst of Intersectionality: Cultural Practices for the Negotiation, Preservation, and Betterment of the Multiply Marginalized Self**

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# Research Questions

How do Mexican American males perceive the construction of their masculinity and access to educational opportunities in the American society?

- How do Mexican American males define themselves as men?
- How do Mexican American male students describe their ways of engaging (practices and habits) in learning experiences in formal and informal education contexts?
- How do Mexican American males perceive the institutional expectations of them in the academic setting?

# Review of Literature

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Historical marginalization of Mexican-Americans

Socialization process of Mexican American males in the family context

Construction of “the” Mexican American masculinity

Marginalization of Mexican American males in formal education settings



# Research design

**Narrative approach** (Labov & Waletzky, 1967; Johnstone, 2002; Young, 1999; Dimitriadis, 2001)

## Theoretical Approach

- Cultural production theory (Levinson & Holland, 1996; )
- Identity theory (Erez & Earley, 1993; Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufmann, 2006; Swidler, 2001; Ursell, 2004)
- Communities of practice (Paechter 2003; Wenger, 1998)

- Central Valley of California. Specifically, Stanislaus, San Joaquin, and Merced counties.
- Demographic survey
- In-depth interviews (2-4hrs) with six Mexican American males
- Image elicitation

- Narrative analysis (stories and episodes)
  - 4 broad themes: culture, family, masculinity, and education
  - Unique trajectories and turning points
  - Construction and representation of the self

# Participants description

Pseudonym	Age	College enrollment status	Neighborhood income	Parents educational level	Parents occupation
Carl Paul	20	4 year university	\$100,000 - \$149,999	Some college	Stay at home mom + Director position
Alex Bode	21	4 year university	\$10,000 - \$19,999	Less than high school	Unemployed + Retired
Frank Lee	37	4 year / Failed to persist junior year	\$30,000 - \$39,999	Some college + Less than high school	Program Director + Unemployed
John Doe	18	Community college	\$60,000 - \$69,999	Some college + high school	Clerk + Driver
Shawn	20	Community college	\$40,000 - \$49,999	Less than high school + high school	Stay at home mom + Batterer
Steve	41	Never	\$40,000 - \$49,999	Some college + high school	Retired teacher +retired electrician



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# Findings

## Territories of marginalization and contestation

- Cultural marginalization- Symbolic violence (Mexican culture as lower status)
- Economic marginalization- Poverty as everyday landscape
- Gendered marginalization- Hegemonic masculinities (expectations of wealth, anti-intellectualism, etc.)

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## Findings

### Active occupation of marginalization

- Mexican American Males move across various communities of practices
- They navigate these communities by constantly adapting and adjusting their status of marginalization
- They re-brand themselves as they move within and across communities of practice

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## Findings

### Moderated masculinities

- Mexican American males negotiated their access and exclusion from spaces of power and authority
- They experienced high levels of confusion and acculturative stress
- They found support through the development of psychological intimacy in significant relationships
- They engaged in self-actualization by expressing acts of hope



# Findings

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School as both marginalizing and liberating

## Marginalizing

- Linguistic restriction
- Labeling
- Glorification of male violence (peer culture)
- Depersonalizing curriculum

## Liberating

- Supportive relationships (Mexican role models)
- Respect for their stories and conditions
- Curriculum based on funds of knowledge and active learning



# Mexican American Male Narratives

## Alex

# ALEX

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## A Mexican American Doer's Masculinities: Building a Critical, Queer, Assertive, and Protective Cis-gender Male Identity



- Family Dynamics: Nurturing a Confident Man
- Hegemonic Masculinity Expectations: Resistance Does Not Run
- A Bi-cultural Identity: Strong Mexican Roots Inspire Growth
- Educational Attainment: How a Mexican American Doer Gets it Done

# ALEX

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*“I always express myself. And I've always been like that. I get personal even when I don't need to, whatever. And I cry, I like to cry during movies. My dad never really shared his emotions, but it wasn't like ‘Why are you crying? Why are you doing that?’... no, that's not okay. It was always like, ‘he wants to show his emotions’. It was always okay.*”



# ALEX

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*“She said I was a little bitch, because I was very [expressive]. I always share my emotions. She's like “you need to man up”. That's what she said.”*



*“But I think it just helps. I think it's just easier that way. For both parties. Like if I didn't share my emotions, then I would just keep it inside, and go cry later. Go cry when nobody's watching. Like okay. Who's that going to help?”*

# ALEX

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*“So my dad has told me stories about how he stood up to certain situations. And they don't necessarily like, I don't think straight back like my dad stood up to them, I'm going to stand ... I don't know socially. I don't know if it's just in the back of my mind, and just automatically plays in situations or roles...”*



# ALEX

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*“You're not going to come at me and do some shitty things, because my parents suffered, and we're not going to. Yeah, well I'm not going to allow it. Like hell no. Let somebody come at me with some bull shit. I'll call it out.”*



# ALEX

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*“Like how our President likes to call us rapists, drug dealers, and I don't know what else he says. I don't know if he's given the stage for the racists, and those people to come out, but it seems like it's getting ... that it's like that now. Like people want to discriminate and be racist, even for freaking speaking Spanish in a restaurant.”*





# ALEX

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*“The hood made me who I am. I love it. If I lived in some normal little nice neighborhood, I don't think I would be who I am today. I think I'd just be anybody else. With no experience of a different life, I think I'd be basic.”*

# ALEX

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*Alex: I was that little nerd, nerdy because I did my school work, and I was ... people say teacher's pet. But whatever."*

*Researcher: You're smiling.*

*Alex: Like yeah-I started volunteering a lot. From helping my teachers out a lot, and I just like ... they always made me feel better. Or good. And they're always like, "Oh, you're so nice, you're such a good helper." I was like, "Oh, I like this."*



# ALEX

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*“Like I love it here. It makes me happy. I'm learning. I'm making friends, making connections, and that's what's important...I love it. I don't want to finish in four years, I want to drag it on.”*





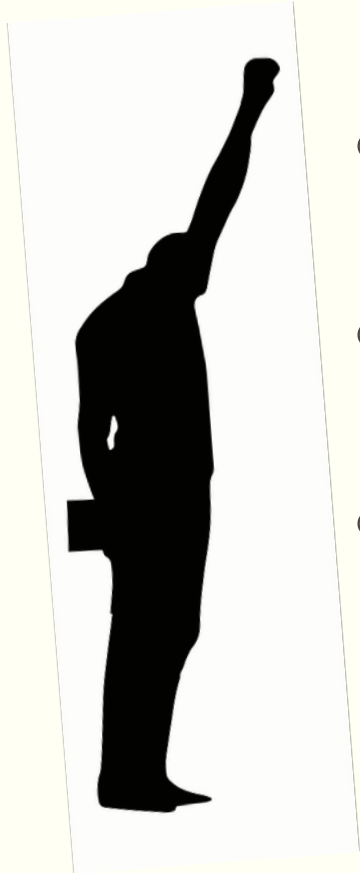
# Mexican American Male Narratives

## Frank Lee

# FRANK LEE

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## A Chicano's Critical Resistance to Anglo-American Hegemony

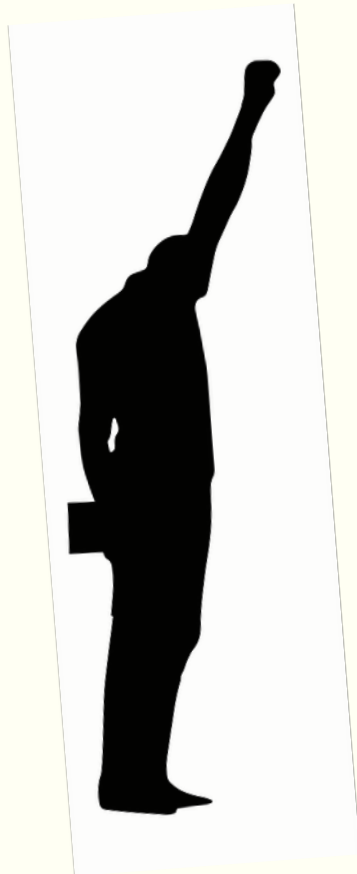


- Family Dynamics: A History of Displacement and Marginalization
- A Bi-cultural Identity: Fighting Competing and Contested Cultures
- Educational Attainment : Developing a Critical Student Role

Identity

# FRANK LEE

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*“Like when you're in competition with other people for what seems like a small piece of pie... It's shameful to stand in the cheese line. It's shameful to be homeless trying to get somebody to give you a place to live.”*

# FRANK LEE

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*“The moment you recognize that I am Native American you now realize that you're in my land. You're in my house. You're in my living room and you refurnished it, but it's still my house. You may have killed my mom and my dad, but I'm still here. That's one of the reasons why I thought Chicano was great... A Chicano is almost not losing any identity.”*



# FRANK LEE

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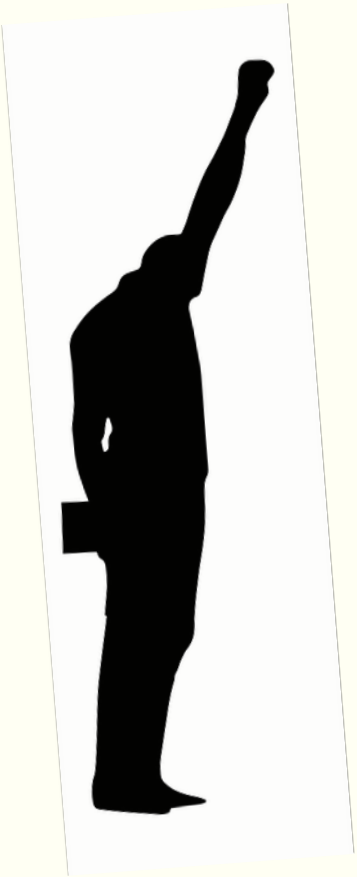
*“Oh, gosh, [junior high] was horrible. 'Cause you're in junior high and I was small for my age group. So I go to junior high, I go to this other school and immediately it's like, boys testing boys.”*





# FRANK LEE

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*“And so I'm like, I need to find an identity within the hood that's not Zach Morris. That's not schoolboy nerdy, because those people are just like, they have no value. Like they don't get invited to places. Women don't like them...That's where hip-hop, the culture of hip-hop, which is like rap music, graffiti and break dancing...It saved my life.”*

# FRANK LEE

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# FRANK LEE

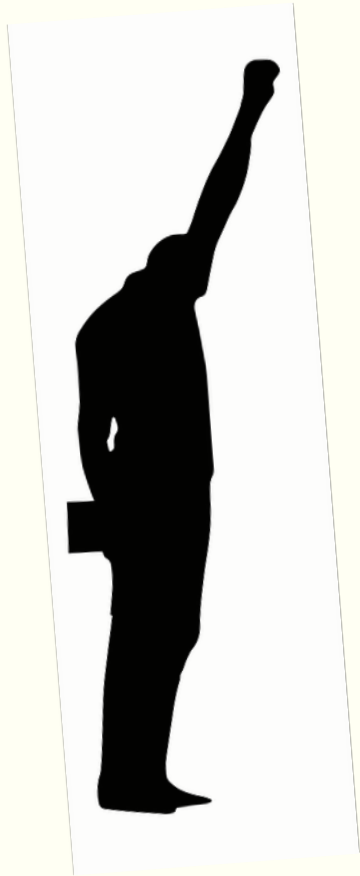
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*“And I remember resources, right. I'm like, you're giving me resources? I could do graffiti as my art class. Okay. I'll take these markers, I'll take these sketch photos, I'll take this, I'll take this... and a video camera. Like if I wanted to, if I didn't want to write an essay I could just video tape myself talking about a subject. So I'm free to think...”*



# FRANK LEE

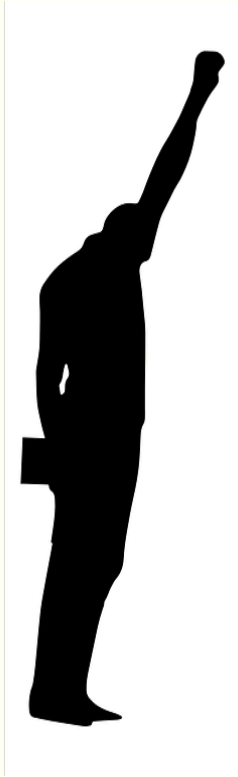
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*“I need to have a certain level of degree so when I write things they'll be like, "Oh he has credibility." But at the same time balancing not getting brainwashed. To not assimilate. To not get used to the 'atta boy.”*

# FRANK LEE

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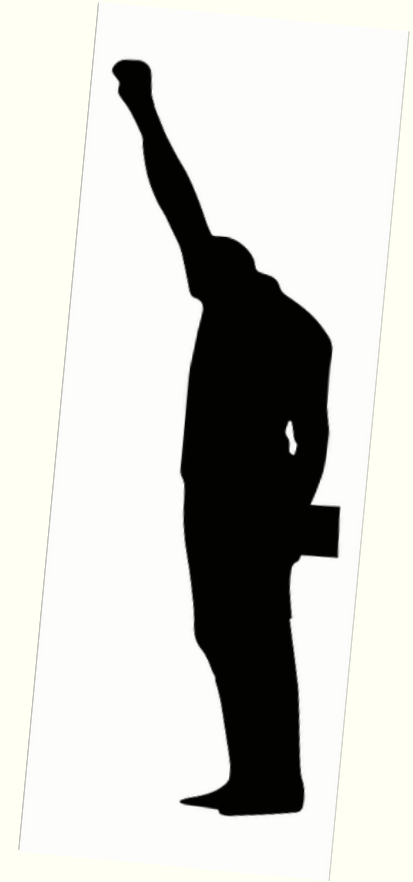


*“And don't be scared, like I feel like some of the instructors are afraid of me...I feel like they're afraid of losing control of the classroom.”*

# FRANK LEE

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*“That's the experience in college that I'm like, Dude, everybody out here wants to castrate me because I'm male.”*





## New understandings (Asset perspective)

### Moderated bi-cultural masculinities

- They constantly adjust their selves to navigate structures of power that both provide and deny access

### Strategic plasticity

- Constant rebranding of the self and permanent self-actualization

### Agency and Faith

- Acts of hope gave them a sense of empowerment

# Future Research

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- A cross cultural communication analysis.
- Communities of practice and role identity construction.
- Role of women in the construction of masculinities.

