Public Abstract

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Title:Strategic Masculinity: A Grounded Theory Examination of the Discourse of Masculinity for College Men

Masculinity is an experience that is angst ridden and stressful for young men in a modern world. The social pressure to perform dominant forms of masculinity along with intersectional issues such as race, sexual identity, and class complicates masculine identity processes. The author employed grounded theory to analyze the discourse of 25 college-age men to ascertain how men enact, negotiate, and manage masculinity. Utilizing the dual perspectives of Precarious Masculinity and Hegemonic Masculinity, the theory of Strategic Masculinity is offered as a communication-centered frame to examine the discourses of men in service of their masculine identity. The theory revealed that men strategically manage masculinity using a variety of strategies in varying contexts. Men engage in precarious discourses, rehabilitation efforts, and the experience of intersectional issues to negotiate personal masculinity. The theory also highlights men's use of gender capital to address challenges to their masculinity. Implications of Strategic Masculinity are discussed and avenues of future development of the model and further research are explored.