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by

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***“We Are Strong, Proud, Hardworking and Passionate Lovers...”:*
Creole men Social Memory, and Self-Representation of Masculinity**

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Report

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Dedication

To Josiah, my deceased son.

Acknowledgements

It was in the midst of what I consider to be the most difficult time in my life. Confronted by many contradictions realizing that close friends (almost brothers) had betrayed us by engaging in child sexual abuse, understanding that access to justice is a painful process and that the Creole community was not yet ready to address sexual violence in an open manner. Not knowing what to do next. Feeling broken and depressed because of the unexpected twists and turns in my life, a dear friend said to me, you should come to graduate school. You may not be able to change all the injustices. Nevertheless, writing about those issues may help you feel better. Your writings combined with your experiences could be used to edify others and make a difference. So, here I am. Analyzing one of those long-standing problems in which women and children are recipients of the major consequences.

This would have never been possible without the unconditional support of my parents, Lindolfo Hodgson and Teresa Suarez. I know that if you could bring down the stars for me, you would do so. To my husband Pedro Solis, who endure long lonely nights as I pursue a different way of changing my realities and those of others. To my princess Evy, my real inspiration as I strive to set a radical example of Black mothering and Black womanhood. To my brothers and sisters, family, and friends in Nicaragua, I can only say thanks. Many thanks to those friends who with wide arms received me in Austin. Pablo López Oro and Osbel Lilan Ramírez, many thanks for your hospitality, and for making my

stay in Austin a safe journey. To my international colleagues, Traci Wint-Hayles, Daniela Gomes, Rony Castillo and Raquel Buelto with whom I could share my discomforts as an international student, and you always knew exactly what I meant. I will ever be in debt to Bethzabeth Colon Pizzini, who with unconditional commitment picked up Evy at Ridgetop elementary school when I was in classes (*Gracias Beth*). Thanks to each one of my professors in African and African Diasporas Studies who patiently took my papers and corrected verbs, punctuation, and grammar. Most of all, thanks for appreciating and respecting my thoughts. Thanks to Dr. Berry for reading my report and for such valuable observations. Many thanks to my friend, colleague, and advisor, Edmund T. Gordon for your generous support and for believing in this project.

I also want to express special thanks to those men who participated in this study and shared their experiences and honest thoughts in relation to Creole masculinity. Without your contribution, this study would have never been possible. Finally, many thanks to the URACCAN university. Thanks for your support and confidence in me. Thanks to my friends and colleagues Grace Kelly, Ivania Garth, and Wendy Cooper.

Abstract

“We Are Strong, Proud, Hardworking and Passionate Lovers...”:
Creole men Social Memory, and Self-Representation of Masculinity

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2018

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“We Are Strong, Proud, Hardworking and Passionate Lovers...”: Creole men Social Memory and Self-Representation of Masculinity, is a product of qualitative research conducted in Bluefields Nicaragua in the summer of 2017. It examines Creole men’s notions and enactment of manhood and their relation to patriarchal respectability. This study delves into Creole men’s reminiscences of the construction of their masculinity, their self-representation, and their understanding of these complex processes as a means to comprehend how patriarchy defines gendered roles and structures Creoles’ interactions on a daily basis. I argue that heterosexual Creoles’ masculinity is based on patriarchal respectability which is forged through the assimilation of gendered based behaviors facilitated through processes of inculcation and emulation enforced by parenting models, community parenthood, and church indoctrination. Creole men believe that their enactment of chauvinism is at a lower level when compared to mestizos and Indigenous men. They understand themselves as *proud, strong, hardworking, and passionate lovers*.

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Introduction

We get married in August 2005. Our first argument was three weeks afta {after} we get married. The thing is that this woman no wash my underwear nor my socks, and how she was working, she hire a woman to wash and iron the clothes. And I watching my wife, because the washa-woman {washer-woman} no wash the underwear. And my wife only wash her own underwear. So, I watching. And well, my mama watching it too, and one day she ask me, Why you wife only wash her panty? I keep quiet because ent I no know... So I take all my boxers and socks and gone wash them and hang then on the front line of my mama house. When I gone in the room my wife she just relaxing on the bed. So, I say to her, you no feel shame that you husband wash him own boxer? The woman look on me like she no understand what I saying. then I tell her, I just hang them in the front line so that all my family and the neighbors could see that you, my wife no wash my boxer, shame on you! then my wife start one laughing on that bed, and she laugh, and laugh. I was mad, mad, mad you know. then she say, I most feel shame because you wash you own boxer? and I answer, yes, shame on you! well to cut the story short, then woman said to me, And who is the one wear the boxer? And I said me, so then she said, Why I most feel shame that you wash the boxers that you going wear? I no feeling no shame fa {for} that boay {boy}! I tell you I was bexed {vexed} that day. Man! When I thinking that my washing days finish because my wife going do it fa {for} me, it was not so. All I thought is, this woman have a problem... That is the first time my wife disrespect me.

Mr. Harry interview, 2017

It was the summer of 2017, a warm evening in tropical Bluefields. Mr. Harry, a Creole man in his early forties, sat on his office chair and narrated events related to his first years of marriage. There he was remembering the disillusion he experienced when realizing that marriage was not what he had expected. His mother had washed his clothes including underwear and socks. At age eighteen, she assigned him the responsibilities of taking care of his laundry, and added: “when you find a wife, make she wash them fa {for} you.” Mr. Harry explained that he comes from a family in which “his parents were clear of each

person's responsibilities." His mother washed his father's clothes and there was no problem at all. He emphasized that he never heard her complaining about doing the home chores. Realizing that his wife was not willing to carry out "her responsibilities" as a wife, contradicted his understanding of what it meant to "have" a wife.

"We Are Strong, Proud, Hardworking and Passionate Lovers...": Creole men Social Memory and Self-Representation of Masculinity, is a portion of a broader research project in which I analyze the seemingly contradictory circumstances in which respectable heterosexual Afrodescendant Creole men are involved in relationships based on romantic love with women and simultaneously engaged in gendered violence and sexual abuse. This paper examines Creole men's notions and enactment of manhood and their relation to patriarchal respectability. This study delves into Creole men's reminiscences of the construction of their masculinity, their self-representation, and their understanding of these complex processes as a means to comprehend how patriarchy defines gendered roles and structures Creoles' interactions on a daily basis.

Black people have lived on what is currently known as the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua for almost four centuries. Enslaved Africans were brought by the British to the Mosquitia shores in 1641. In 1841, slavery was abolished, and the newly freed established the Creole community. After the abolition of slavery in the West Indies (1833), waves of migration occurred from the Caribbean Islands to the Caribbean coasts of Central America, in Nicaragua, they became members of the Creole Community (Goett, 2017; Gordon, 1998). Creoles constituted their own society and shared position of government with the Miskito Indians. Nevertheless, the enforced military annexation of the Mosquitia Kingdom

to the state of Nicaragua in 1894, brought Blacks and Indigenous people into a Mestizo (Indio-Hispano) majority nation where they are minimized, unrecognized, oppressed, exoticized, hypersexualized, discriminated against, and deprived of their rights (Gordon, 1998). Navigating an antiblack multicultural context, Black people have been forced to implement various forms of resistance.

The examination of Creole men's collective memory of manhood explicates the circumstances that forge their notions and enactment of heterosexual masculinity. Collective or social memory is the shared knowledge and information in the memories of two or more members of a group that informs their identities. According to Halbwachs (1992), "It is in society that people acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories" (p 38), this allows people to form, create and sustain meanings, symbols, and practices that are shared, and passed on from generation to generation to constitute their identity, cosmology and culture. Consequently, without memory, there can be no self, no identity, and no society (Olick & Robbins, 1998).

Analyzing Creole men's self-representation of masculinity, enables us to understand how the circumstances under which their masculinity was forged informs their self-perception, which then shapes their enactment of manhood. This helps to demonstrate how Creole men perceive themselves and the ways they present themselves to others. Self-representation is composed of three levels of self-construal. At the individual level, the personal self is distinguished, and individual self-concept. At the interpersonal level, the relational self is the self-concept derived from connections and role relationships with

significant others. At the group-level is the collective self, which corresponds to the concept of social identity (as cited by Brewer & Gardner, 1996).

I conducted fifteen in-depth interviews with Creole young adult and adult men between the ages of 25 through 60. My interlocutors were community leaders, pastors, school teachers, professors, and “regular” Black men¹. I applied textual and content discourse to analyze their responses from a Black feminist perspective. Building off bell hooks’ (1992), theorization of *oppositional gaze* which she defines as “those hard-intense looks that are confrontational gestures of resistance that aim to challenge and dismantle systems of oppression.” I look back to expose systems of oppression under which Black women and children are subjected to. As hooks says, “not only will I stare, I want my look to change reality (115, 116).” I draw from Hill Collins (2002; 2016) analysis of intersectionality to demonstrate how Creoles’ masculinity is constructed under various systems of White hegemonic oppressions, and the ways power of domination implemented by White heterosexual men replicates itself employing similar patterns of control. Additionally, Edmund Gordon’s (1997) examination on the Cultural Politics of Black Masculinity, and Allan Johnson’s (2014) explications on the legacy of patriarchy provides a rigorous scholarship, which combined with my participant observations enables me to offer a characterization of heterosexual creole men notions and enactment of manhood, and to pose a critic against various forms of patriarchy.

¹ For purposes of this study, the terms Afro-descendant, Creole, and Black are used as synonym. The variation in the use of these terms in the text does not connote any distinction. Conversations were held in English Kriol language. The responses that I have selected to share are kept intact with some grammatical modifications. And I am not using my interlocutors official names.

This study argues that heterosexual Creoles' masculinity is based on patriarchal respectability which is forged through the assimilation of gendered based behaviors facilitated through processes of inculcation and emulation enforced with parenting models, community parenthood, and church indoctrination until it became a normalized behavior. Although it appears to be that Black women are complicit in the establishment of Creoles' patriarchy, I contend that this apparent active role is not entirely a free willed action. I claim that Creole men exert control over child rearing by policing and regulating female strategies of raising their sons. This also discloses the ways hegemonic masculinity influence men and women intimate relationships.

Creole men are fully aware of their positionality as *Black and men* in an antiblack multicultural patriarchal space. Here I claim that heterosexual Creole masculinity is also engrained with various forms of resistance to White and Mestizos' patriarchal oppressions. Nevertheless, the relative understanding of their gendered privilege does not have a significant impact in the ways they interact with women and children. Creole men believe that their enactment of chauvinism is at a lower level when compared to mestizos and Indigenous men. They understand themselves as *proud, strong, hardworking, and passionate lovers*.

This paper is divided in two parts. In the first chapter I implemented a retrospective approach to analyze Creole men's memories of their childhood experiences to identify those key factors that contributed to the construction of their masculinity. This part also draws from some historical facts of the emerge of the Creole society and the ways Moravian missionaries contributed to the establishment of patriarchal respectability which

regulate creoles' life up to this day. Chapter two examines Creole men's self-representation and situates Creole men contemporary experiences as gender and race intersect in a multicultural context.

Chapter One: “*Your World Make You a Man*”: Social Memory and the Construction of Creole Manhood

I remember that when I was growing up, back in the 1960’s-1970’s, my parents were very strict. That part of the Bible what say no spare the rod and spile {spoil} the child? I feel like my parents only know that out the Bible. Any disrespect, any disobedience, they put hand on us. In my family as in many other families, when we was child, and even as teen age, the person that care fa {for} us was mostly the mama. The papa them be out. Mama use the persuasion most of the time. Ruddy go do this, and if you no move, she repeat it, and repeat it. But when papa come him going halla {holler} two times, or him going hold the belt so you have to move. So, we were like fraid {afraid} of the rod. So, my parents teach us to be obedient. Of course, you find children very stubborn, and well them had it rough. You see, most of the training in them time, and this is at a regional level, everybody had this system. We boay {boy} had to full the wata {water}, get the rake to clean the yard, and go make the errands. The gial {girl} wash, sweep the house, make up the bed, cook and other stuff. I learn to do some of the gial {girl} things and when my sista {sister} no there, as the oldest son I prepare the suppa {supper}. But only when she not there. When she there well everybody had their thing to do. But we learn to do both... As a child coming up you go to school, you go to Sunday school, because you parent send you even if them no to church. you do work in the home and you had your time to recreate. Those times, people may still memba {remember}, you have the Los Angeles theater, Variedades theater, them was the two-major theater. So, if you parents have a likle {little} money them send you to the theater.”

Mr. Aaron interview, 2017

Mr. Aaron, of sixty years, has been married twice, has five children, and works as a watchman at a hotel in downtown Bluefields. He remembers that at an early age Creoles are taught their role in this society by the inculcation of responsibilities that men and women are to comply with. Mr. Aaron emphasizes that mothers were responsible of the domestic chores, including taking care of their children, while the father or the step-father worked out of the home and undertook the responsibilities of providing shelter, clothes, and food for the family. Consequently, as a child or as a teenager, there were also specific chores assigned to girls and boys. Mr. Aaron asserts that “this was a system implemented at a regional level,” denoting that a similar parenting pattern was conducted in all families.

Returning to Mr. Harry's account, he also highlighted that parents were always clear on each person's responsibilities. Additionally, he assures that he "never heard his mother complaining". When I asked, where did parents learned that this is the way things should function at home? Mr. Aaron, not hesitating, responded: "that is just the way things is. The world is like that." It all suggests that, in his understanding, the differentiated activities developed by men and women, are a natural or biological condition intrinsic to every human being that cannot be questioned nor altered.

Mr. Beto, who in his mid-fifties, has been married twice, has three children, and works as a teacher at a local university, also remembers that Creoles practiced an Authoritative Parenting Model. He asserts that beating was a "tool of correction" often implemented to reaffirm appropriate gendered and sexual behaviors.

...Some of the messages were with a whipping coming behind it. Just to tell you man don't do that, or man do the other. They will make you learn in the easy way or the hard way. For example, they would make sure you understand what the man supposed to look like, and what he supposed to be like. So, when you start crying even mom used to say men don't cry! So right there they are giving you the message that you are expected to be a tough man. And you grow up thinking that a man don't cry. And that you can't show weakness. And they would make sure you understand that, and men don't act like sissy (effeminate)... I also think religion played a very important role in shaping Black manhood in Bluefields. Because most Black families have a religious base, and from we are small we are taught what it means to be a man from a biblical principle. The church teach what a man should look like. In addition, your dad, your grandfather, a step father or whoever were in charge of you, would also model what a man would look like.

Mr. Beto interview, 2017

Mr. Beto's assertions reveals that for the Creoles, discipline at home, combined with education at school and at church were important aspects in child rearing. As stated by Wilson (1969) these connote the perfect equation for the implementation of the politics

of respectability, which he defined as “a degree of approximation to standards of the legal society, and establishes codes of moral behaviors that does not correspond with the rational system of values practiced in a community on a daily basis (78)”. Consequently, a respectable man pursues marriage, possess economic security, and affiliation to a church and/or political organizations. Gordon (1998), affirms that in opposition to the negative stereotypes that portray Black people as savages, sexual deviant and immoral, influenced by the church Creoles perform politics of respectability as a form of resistance. The author argues that Black respectability is not solely an emulation of Whites notions of respectability. He argues that Black respectability is “rooted in African patriarchy and segmentary-lineage socio-political organization.” He asserts that contemporary "respectable males embrace hegemonic notions of moral worth, pride, civility, sincerity, discretion, and personal responsibility. They are family heads who are preeminently successful economic providers as well as responsible husbands and fathers” (Gordon, 1997, p. 45). From his perspective Black respectability is in part, a result of the emulation and assimilation of European cultural practices, which informs Black male concern with White perceptions of the Black community, in combination with African patriarchy. I agree with these authors and assert that in the Creole society, as in most Black communities, education at home, school, and church are the cornerstone of patriarchal respectability. Nevertheless, a better understanding of Creoles’ politics of patriarchal respectability requires an analysis of some historical facts regarding the emerge of Creole society.

Enslaved Africans were brought by the British to the Mosquitia shores in 1641. These settlements were under the Jamaican governor who appointed a superintendent to

protect the interest of the British Crown. Major settlements were located in Black River, Cabo Gracias a Dios, Bluefields, Corn Island, Bragmans Bluff (Bilwi), Punta Gorda, and Pearl Key Lagoon (Pearl Lagoon) where they labored on cotton, sugar, Indigo, and sarsaparilla plantations; they also worked in sea turtle fishing, and in the cutting of cedar and mahogany lumber for exportation (Gordon, 1998). During slavery Black men were deprived of their masculine rights. They were unable to protect Black women and children from sexual exploitation, punishments and other forms of subjugations (Forret, 2015; Lussana, 2016). As highlighted by Foster (2011), many enslaved Black men were also sexually assaulted either through “physical penetrative assault, forced reproduction, sexual coercion and manipulation” (4). These situations resulted in the emasculation of the Black man. In his autobiography, Baquaqua (Law & Lovejoy, 2001) describes that enslaved men often engaged in alcoholic consumption as a way to cope with their inhumane conditions. Lussana and Foster also asserts that fighting and quarreling among themselves constituted other ways by which enslaved men attempted to regain authority and respect from their peers. In a culture of imperialist *white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy*, Black men longed to assume full patriarchal responsibility. Consequently, in the aftermath of slavery Black men often used violence to dominate others, they reproduced the strategies of control previously implemented by the slave masters. It all suggest that by the end of slavery patriarchal masculinity had become an ideal enactment of manhood (hooks, 2004).

Higginbotham (1993), argues that in the United States the church (the Baptist in particular) played a fundamental role in indoctrinating politics of respectability in the African American Community. In Nicaragua, although records demonstrate that Puritan

minister Samuel Key, who was settled in Providence Island² evangelized the Miskito between the years of 1633 through 1635, it was the United Brothers Church, better known as the Moravians³, who arrived at the Mosquitia shore in 1847 and evangelized to transformed Black people into acceptable human beings.

At their arrival the Moravians often expressed their concerns regarding what they considered to be the “innate indolence of the negro” (Zacek & Brown, 2014, p. 501). In journals and letters, missionaries described Creoles as superstitious, naïve, ignorant, polygamous, violent and drunkards. Black females, were described as promiscuous and irresponsible mothers. Christmas in Bluefields was considered to be the most pagan part of the year. They stated that “dancing and rolling of drums went on day and night. The drunkenness was simply awful and the whole town was in a condition beyond description. We hardly thought it possible that people could degrade themselves so deeply” (Offen & Rugeley, 2014, p. xxv). In his autobiography, Bell (1989)⁴, asserts that missionaries worked very hard to convince Black people to abandon their corrupted and lascivious ways of living in order to become respectable praying souls: “Before the Moravian missionaries arrived, we were very heathen at Blewfields. Obeah and wakes were practiced in the regular African fashion. There was no marriage, no christening, no church. Wife-beating was fearfully common, and quarrelling was carried out systematically. Negro women are used

² The Providence Island colony was established in 1631 by English Puritans on what is now the Colombian Department of Isla de Providencia, 200 kilometers east of the coast of Nicaragua. In 1641, the Spanish attacked and destroyed the colony.

³ *Unitas Fratrum*, one of the oldest Protestant denominations in the world with its heritage dating back to the Bohemian Reformation in the fifteenth century) established in the Kingdom of Bohemia.

⁴ Charles N. Bell (1835 - 1906). born at Rothesay, Scotland son of James Stanislaus Bell, trader, and adventurer. Wrote of his adventures “among the gentle savages of the Mosquitia Jungle.”

to being beaten, and it makes no difference in their attachment to their husbands. In course of time some Moravian missionaries settled in Blewfields, and all the people forthwith took up religion and praying. When the missionaries introduced marriage, the people did not take to it much. they preferred their own looser tie” (p. 30).

Shortly, Moravian missionaries obtained great political power and influence. They became advisors to the Mosquito King and his officials in government. The Moravians operated as the national religion of the Mosquitia. Their main areas of intervention were education,⁵ health, infrastructure, economics, and politics (Offen & Rugeley, 2014). Missionaries interventions were patriarchal oriented. Men were taught to be God-fearing beings, holders of private property, and to be head of their household. Black females, were taught that their worth consisted in being a “diligent wife and mother.” As we read through the experiences of the Moravian missionaries, it could easily be interpreted that they risked their lives, sacrificed everything, and worked tirelessly for very little financial reward. Nevertheless, before acclaiming the benevolent will of the White missionaries, I want to note that we cannot overlook the fact that they denied the former enslaved the capacity to decide, to reason, and to act in their best interest (agency). Zacek & Brown (2014), claims that while missionaries established a different pattern compared to the one practiced by typical planters, one thing remained the same, they sought to control people in all areas of their lives.

⁵ Moravian missionaries founded the first school in Bluefields and taught Black people to read and write.

I argue that Creole's politics of patriarchal respectability have evolved under various stages of Whites' hegemonic patriarchal colonization. Previous to the abolition of slavery in 1841, Black enslaved endured two hundred years of British plantation patriarchy which was characterized with domination through violence (hooks, 2004). Later, the abolition of slavery brought the newly freed Black population into a benevolent and respectable patriarchal indoctrination in the hands of Moravian missionaries who taught them to exercise power without the implementation of physical violence. Lastly, the annexation of the Mosquitia to Nicaragua in 1894, positioned Creoles under an antiblack Mestizo patriarchal occupation. In other words, Black people were abruptly transferred from a white patriarchal system to a mestizo patriarchal system (Gordon, 1998).

After the incorporation of the Mosquitia to Nicaragua the Catholic⁶, Anglican, and Baptist (1922) established churches in Bluefields. Along with the Moravians, these are known as the traditional churches. Nevertheless, Moravians were able to expand over the entire territory. Something that is characteristics of these religious denominations is that they all created "formal schools" that continue to offer their service up to this day. Evangelical churches arrived later in the mid 90's. Adding the Adventist and the Pentecostal to the missionary churches, in Bluefields, there are approximately six religious denominations, with over twelve churches that gather only Black people, and are known as Black churches. It is important to understand the trajectory of the religious denomination in the region. As noted by historians and participants of this study, the church had, and

⁶ Mestizos mostly integrate the Catholic membership. Creoles are not devoted of Catholicism. Nevertheless, they do have a Black Catholic church whose membership is small.

continue to have, a transcendental impact in the ways men understand their social position as head and overseers of the woman and children. Consequently, they shape gender roles and politics of hegemonic patriarchal respectability in the Creoles' society

Understanding Patriarchy and its Legacy.

Johnson (2014), claims that “a society is patriarchal to the degree that it promotes male privilege by being male dominated, male identified, male centered, and obsessed with male control.” Therefore, men are in a position that shape culture in ways that “serves men’s collective interest.” The author claims that “control” is an essential component of patriarchy (p. 6). Therefore, men are expected to be unemotional (except for anger and rage), invulnerable, autonomous, independent, strong, rational, logical, dispassionate, knowledgeable (even when they know nothing), always right, and in command of women. It all results in patriarchal manhood. In contrast, women are forced to be humble and submissive in relation to men.

Within this context Creole men asserted that the male figure in their family and neighborhood served as a model to follow and imitate. Some families were constituted by father and mother, others by mother and a stepfather, and in female-headed families, grandfathers, uncles, and neighbors became an important significant other in the life of boys. Mr. Frank, who is in his late forties, works as a teacher at a primary school, has been married twice, and has five children, stated that his father was the most important role model.

In my case I will say my papa was my model, him was a strict man. When I was a kid, my mom use to put my older brotha {brother} and myself to wash the house, wash dishes and things that girls would do, and my papa would come from work and say heee! what my boys doing in the kitchen washing dishes? So, then he will say to my mom, you have enough girls in this house to do that, put them (the boys) to rake the yard, wash the house on the outside part, and things that concerned supposedly man work. So, every morning before him go to work, him would be the one to assign us our work for the day. So we did that up to 10 or 11 years. And afterwards he said you boys have to work. So he send us down to one of his friends taller (machine shop). First, we learned to fix tired (assemble and disassemble vehicle tires), and eventually learn to weld. You know stuff like that. My papa him was direct. And what he was trying to say is you not supposed to wash dishes, doing girls things. I think all of that influence.

Mr. Frank interview, 2017

Mr. Andrew, who is a high school teacher, in his mid-forties, married and with three children, grew up without his father. Nevertheless, he explained the ways other male figures contributed to shaping his manhood.

My father abandon me when I was like 6 years old. Then I have a sister by mother side and have 3 sisters and 1 brother by father side. When I think on how I learn to be a man, or how I know what a man supposed to be, I think of my mama first, then a brotha in law {brother-in-law} that was around, then I had other men in the neighborhood that I would always look up too, and some of the teachers that we had at school even though they were very strict and tough as we call it, we always look up to them, and that help us a lot. Well, them wasn't giving us message in words, it was more their behavior and we look on them, them was hardworking, even though some of them wasn't to influential. Many of them had their wife with kids and then they had others outside there, but them will always be at home, or have a official place them call home. So, I used to go taking pieces from everyone and putting it together. I remember two in particular. They are both dead now. One was a owner of a wales (boat maintenance shop) in Pointeen. So when I have vacation, Monday 6 o'clock in the morning him come wake me up, time to go work. And I used to say, time to go work? This is vacation. So him use to say, if you want have money you have to go work. So Monday through Friday, you doing work that is not fa {for} little boys because you working in repairing boats. So you work from 6 to 12 then from 1 to 4:30, and Saturday from 7-12 mid-day. On Saturday them

pay you. So I learn from him that to have money, you got to work hard. So then I grow up with that, and as I had a likkle {little} opportunity to get a chamba (short term jobs) to get some money I neva {never} think it twice because I know if I want money, my mama couldn't give it to me, so I had to hustle for it. And the other one is my uncle, him was the captain of a boat. Him was running up the riva {river}, then to Corn Island. Him would take me and my two cousins, because he say: you need to learn to work so that tomorrow when you become a man and you have a wife and family, you will be able to maintain them. In my case being a man, I learn it by observing because I didn't have someone to directly influence me, or direct me on how to be a man, and of course, you had some that when you look at them you say, no, no, no, that's not the way. I use to say the day I have a wife I no want be the kind that you have one child here, two there, one there, I said I no want that.

Mr. Andrew interview, 2017

Mr. Andrew explanations, as well as that of other Creole men, leads us to understand that in the 50's, 60's, 70's and even in the early 80's child rearing was based on community parenting. Adults in the community had the right to correct someone else's child behavior, and at times spank them if necessary. At school teachers were allowed to chastise children in ways they considered convenient (kneeling, spanking, etc.). Importantly, Community parenting was also fundamental in training black boys into skill jobs. As noted by Mr. Frank, Mr. Andrew, their fathers and/or other men in the community taught them that to be hardworking men. In the absence of universities, learning one or several trades enabled them to do any type of work. As asserted by Lussana (2016), in enslaved communities, Black men taught their children various trade as a mean of survival and prestige. This suggests that these traditions have continued from generation through generations in the Black communities. it also demonstrates that community support

contributed to the establishment of appropriate gender roles behaviors, and in training younger boys to be industrious.

Mr. Patrick, who in his late fifties, married, with three children, and pastor of a traditional Black church in Bluefields, provides another important example of the ways community parenthood function in Creole society.

Back then, parents will ignorantly [not having a formal education] teach their children good manners. For example, if you go out and you don't give an older one the hour of the day, be it good morning, or good evening, believe me that person would come to you parents and put complain, you know John didn't tell me good morning or good evening, and parents will then punish you. So to avoid getting beating, you had to make sure you behaving right. And if a teacher complained about you, mmm, then you prepare, because for sure you getting another beating at home. Everybody had to do with you. Now we don't have control over the children, now we kiant {can't} even look on them too hard because of the new law...

Mr. Patrick interview, 2017

Creole men's experiences reaffirms that gendered behaviors are primarily based on the biological sex of the person, and are ritualistically, explicitly, and implicitly validated by communities within everyday interactions (Jackson & Balaji, 2011). Although masculinity is defined in opposition to femininity, men assert their manhood in relation to one another; it is in homosocial spaces that men seek other men's approval in order to reaffirm their manhood (Johnson, 2014; Lussana, 2016). Butler (1990) explains that gender is a large product of repeated performances that, influenced by powerful social sanctions, produce an "illusion" of fixed identities linked to biological sex. Gatens (1996) elucidates that historically, masculinity and femininity are forms of "sex appropriate behaviors" based on a cultural shared *fantasy* of male and female biology. They all assert

that the connection between sex and gender/roles are not arbitrary but constructed. Consequently, Masculinity and femininity are “a social construct.”

For Creole men, childhood memories reveal the strict regulation implemented to ensure manhood through the correction of effeminate behaviors. This exposes the homophobia embedded in the Creole society at the time. As asserted by gender scholars, the construction of gender identities is a social process. According to Kimmel (2001), Community members control people gendered performances by “establishing penalties for those who ignore such rules. On the contrary, Individuals are rewarded when their gendered behavior is consistent with culturally defined norms.” As asserted by my interviewees, when a boy was perceived as feminine, parents and community members strongly sanctioned him. The rod of correction and discrimination (in forms of apathy, isolation, and mockery) were implemented as methods to correct that which appeared to be abnormal. Accordingly, policing gender performances is powerful strategy to guarantee compliance with socially prescribed male gender roles within a society, and among peers (Sallee & Harris, 2011).

These notions are also reaffirmed by Mr. Dave, who is in his early sixties, have been “proudly” married for thirty-five years, has two children, and works as a private accountant.

In Bluefields, when I was growing up I learn that to be a man you act a certain kind of way: know to fight, know to defend yourself, you have to be brave. And if you didn't have that strong character them would look on you and even discriminate you because of you way of being. If you too soft, then them say you too coward. When I was growing up, the mama and the granny use to be in the home, the papa, the uncle them and the olda {older} brotha {brother} use to go out to work, so then

who had the role of bringing up the child is the mama and she was the main one to say, come on boay {boy}, stop crying like likkle gial {little girl}.

Mr. Dave interview, 2017

When talking with younger men about what it means to be a man? and how did they learned to be a man? Responses continue to connote gendered differences based on what is expected of a man. Dean, who is a single, unemployed young man in his late twenties explained:

I would more say I learn to be a man based on my own personal experience. I mean by growing and watching others, and well, when I go church and hear the pastor preaching so I get knowledge and learn stuff. My papa used to hardly be with me, and I no rememba {remember} anything that him teach me. Most of the time my papa been working on ship [cruise ship], so him was hardly home. I no even rememba {remember} how old I was when my papa gone on ship. Well now him get fire {fired} from the ship and him here but now things different. Just this few time that him been here, him come now trying to be strict on everybody, him want you to do work like construction work, to mix cement, to fix the door, or the window, and things like that. And then him asking you how you kiant {can't} do this or do that? But how you going do it if no body teach you? But how you going do it if him wasn't around to teach you? And well I didn't stick [interact] with my uncle them so I neva {never} learn. And well them neva {never} pay me much attention neitha {neither} as how a fatha {father} would have do.

Dean interview, 2017

Dean's experience reflects the contemporary reality of most young boys and girls in Bluefields. Similar to narratives expressed by older Creole men, Dean's explanation also denotes the absence of the father. However, in this case the absence is of a different nature. Nicaragua has high levels of poverty and extreme poverty (PNUD, 2005). In the Caribbean Coast, coming on to the mid 80's, most Creole men were forced to migrate in pursuit of better wages jobs. The opportunity offered to Creole men was to work on *cruise-ship*. Unfortunately, statistics on how of many Creoles have been, or are currently working on a cruise ship are not available. However, to provide an estimation, I will exemplify it in the

ways Creoles do it, “every Black family in Bluefields has as least one relative working on ship.” In the 80’s and 90’s this left mothers and grandmothers with the full responsibilities of raising their sons and daughters. Most recently Black women have also opted to work on a cruise ship, leaving their children with grandmothers, aunties, and nannies. I want us to note that notions of manhood based on gendered roles continue to prevail, with the exception, as nostalgically pointed out by Dean, the training into being “hard working man,” and learning skill jobs are lacking. Mr. Patrick, and Mr. Aaron claim that “the new generation of young Black man is lazy because now the papa, and the mama send everything from of the ship.” Mr. Frank, asserts that not having the opportunity to pursue a university career, the “*ship-out*” men are interested in providing their children with the best education. Nevertheless, he claims: “the problem is that the young children no want study, them want go on ship to, and well now is call center.”

Adam, a single young man in his mid-twenties, is studying at a local university, also shares his experience regarding learning to be a man when your father is working on cruise ship. Adam was fourteen years old when his father “join ship.” His expressions are indicative that he was able to establish a strong emotional connection with his father. Nevertheless, this was broken because of the distance.

When I growing up with my papa I see the things him use to do fa {for} we, and the way him act, so according to his way I going following. First of all, from small him teach me the moral values, and the way we should live with each other, and knowing how to take decision and not run up into things as the first opportunity come up. Wait and see if is a good thing that you going get into. The thing is that my papa had to gone on ship. Well, and now him done have 10 years since him join the ship. Having you fatha {father} away from you is hard. Because though you have you mama, you always need you papa there to counsel you. Telling you how

to go along, how to do the boay {boy} stuff, or the man stuff too. Well you mama no manage about boays {boys} stuff. So you need your fatha {father} there. Well you talk through phone but is not the same because you no have the time to sit down and tell him everything and well is like you no feel the same. And when him come fa {for} vacation you no express the same love because him have plenty time out and well you feel a distance between you and him. Well sometimes I have things to ask him, jajajaja., that I no want ask my mama, but afterwards I no ask it because I feeling likkle {little} rare [shame]. Well, I end up talking it with my friend them.

Adam interview, 2017

Dean and Adam's explanations reveals their sentiments of nostalgia and a certain level of frustration in relation to not having a male figure that would teach them to do the "*the man stuff*." Additionally, from their perspective, the mother does not have the capacity to deal with "man issues," because those are things that only a man can understand. Interestingly, the mothers who faithfully raise their sons into appropriate manhood, are now unable to provide proper advice regarding pubertal changes, as for example. Ultimately, boys whose fathers work on cruise ship rely on their peers for advice.

Here I want to take time to contest Creole men assertions that Black women are equally responsible of contributing to the establishment of patriarchal masculinity. By affirming that mothers were primarily responsible for training their children, Creole men are also claiming that women are to be held accountable for the existence of the "*macho man*" in our society. Therefore, the responsibility is not solely on men. To be sincere, I was not surprised to hear this argument. The first time I heard of Black women's participation in the establishment of machismo I could hardly believe it. It was in 2006 at a woman conference on gendered violence in Bluefields. Black feminist organizations accused "women of being more patriarchal than men." I Asked myself, why would a

woman teach her son to be rude, tough, and authoritative towards women? Nevertheless, the various conversations held with Creole men provided the answer.

Mr. Frank previously explained that his mother taught him and his brother to do the domestic task at home. This is suggestive that his mother possessed a different notion regarding the division of domestic labor in the home. Nevertheless, when his father returned from work and found his sons doing “women task,” he would reaffirm his authority over the family, including their mother, and corrected her ways of rearing his sons. Mr. Aaron’s also denoted that his mother taught him to do domestic work. However, he was only demanded to so in the absence of his sister. In fact, most Black men assert that they learned to do home chores. However, they always knew that once they establish a formal relationship with a woman, that would not be their responsibility any longer. Mr. Dave, provides further insights into understanding the dynamics between mother and father in the establishment of their son’s manhood.

The first years, like until you have 5 or 8 years the mama have the role to take care of you. afta {after} that, you can run behind papa. In them times there was very few office man, so everybody use to do other work, like carpenter, welder, mechanic, things like that. So, the papa them use to care [carry] you to help them. And how you have to could defend yourself {yourself}, even pass a hammer or pass something. But the first bringing up is the mama responsibility.

Mr. Dave interview, 2017

Creole men’s explanations denote that the male figure was not completely absent from childrearing. Although men spent most of the time out of the house, they policed and regulated the ways mothers raised their sons. Contrary to Clarke’s (1957) assertions that in the absence of the male figure single Jamaican mothers “worked as a man” to father their

children, I argue that the phrase “*My mother who fathered me*” fits well into situations in which men implement diverse strategies to guarantee that mothers would continue to reproduce hegemonic patriarchal notions. Additionally, Creole men conveniently waited for their sons to gain a measure of independence in order to have a direct influence in shaping their sons’ (boys) manhood. At a certain age (between the ages of 5 through 8), the father, a stepfather, an uncle, or a neighbor stepped in to finalize the formation of manhood. Even in female headed families, women were not independent in childrearing decisions. Therefore, to affirm that Creole women are responsible for raising men to be patriarchal, authoritative and abusers of women is an erroneous assumption.

The question that emerges then is, why women participate in the establishment of patriarchal manhood? This is something I hope to expand in my broader project. Nevertheless, I do want to explain that Black women accepted, and in many cases continue to accept the hegemonic heteropatriarchal system because Black men forced them to accept that the male is a superior being. Additionally, Black men made women to believe that for the sake of uplifting the race men had to assume their rightful position as head of the family and as capable leaders in the Black community. Therefore, whatever decision they made, was/is in the best interest of the Black women (hooks, 2004). Hegemonic masculinity permits men to pursue self-preservation by “privileging men at the expense of women” (Sallee & Harris, 2011). Additionally, women have been taught to hope that things will get better based on sacrificial love. In this sense, women who experience intimate partner violence hope that at some point their love will cause the man to reconsider his abusive behavior and change to finally become the good man he is meant to be.

From Boyhood to Manhood

According to Creole men, the transition from boyhood to manhood is marked by specific circumstances rather than a precise age. In their understanding, the moment a boy has sexual intercourse with a woman and loses his virginity, is an indicator of manhood. Additionally, if the woman becomes pregnant, he proves his sexual powers, which then reaffirms that he is a real man. Nevertheless, they also assert that “real manhood” will only be attained when the individual is capable to assume the responsibilities of providing shelter and food for his own family. From this standpoint, those who are of age, and still reside under their parents’ roof, are not considered to be a complete man.

Well here in Bluefields I hear people saying that man is somebody who make a child already. others say is when you working and getting you own money, and you no depending on you papa or you mama. But most is when them done make a child, well them will say them is a man. In my opinion I would say that a man is not only who done make a child, but a man is someone who if them done make a child them will take care of them children, who be there fa {for} them family and be a head of the home. And if them no have children yet, they will be a person responsible of knowing of to take good decision, and no acting childish around the place.

Adam interview, 2017

Well we have the saying [a popular phrase] that your world make you a man. I rememba {remember} that when I was young, and we had girlfriend we neva {never} had much liberty to have our hands all ova {over} a girl. I always had that respect and I say No, if I reach to that I going have to be ready to respond. I done know that if I do that [have sexual intercourse], I going have to become a man even if I still a young boay {boy}. Than mean that I become a man before time and I going can’t respond because imagine you get mix up with you girlfriend [to pregnant a girl]. So I believe things should be by step. But fa {for} me, if you young and in sexual relationship, then that is the transition, but then you become a man before time. And then when you begin a family, you have to have a certain character. You got to know how to act like a man. That’s the thing, I believe that

if you going call yourself a man, you have to know how to back up [to prove] that saying. If you is a married man you have to keep that position with all the responsibilities that it take to have a family. And if is just a man without a purpose, without ambition, you be like, how you say, like a ship just sailing without destiny.

Mr. Aaron interview, 2017

You see, if we go way back to Africa there was something called a graduation stage for the transition from boy to manhood, where they were proven by certain test that the elder men did. And in the older times the African man were taken into the hunting to prove that they are a man. All of that disappeared over the centuries, and we don't have a graduation stage from boyhood to manhood. But in a certain way we did. I remember here in Bluefields, when I was growing up boys were taken by their father into the whore houses, and well, you done know for what. of course, that disappeared now. But them times we were full of whore houses. That was way back in the 60's and 70's where legally as far as I could remember five whore houses were in Bluefields, where boys were taken by their dads to prove their manhood when they were between 12 and 14, suddenly after that they were a man. Now in these days is very difficult to describe what makes a man any more. Because now you have guys staying with their moms even after their 30's, especially Black man. In my opinion, and I no care what them want say, you are not a man if you are still living at you moms house. To be a man you have to leave mom's house and if you leave and take care of your own business, and take care of a wife or a girlfriend, now you become a man because you can take care of you own responsibilities, and nobody have to do it for you.

Mr. Beto interview, 2017

This was the first time I heard anyone narrating that Creole boys were taken to sex workers as a form of initiation into manhood. I asked older Creole men about this detail, and they all confirmed the existence of several "whorehouses" during that time. However, they do not remember if boys were taken there by their fathers. I asked Mr. Beto if he was taken to a whorehouse as well, his immediate response was "Thank God not. Because my father was a minister so that didn't happen. My dad was completely different." Nevertheless, he continued to reassure that some of his friends had that experience.

Overall, Creole men denote that virility and aggression are considered to be important aspects in defining manhood. Wilson (1969) asserts that virility and aggression are in fact the two main criteria of manhood. The first is understood as the capacity to impregnate any amount of woman. And the second, is the capacity to bringing others under subjection through fear, intimidation, and violence. Additionally, Creole men highlight a third component in the definition of manhood, this is regarding their capability to assume the responsibilities as head and providers of the family, which is a particular characteristic of patriarchal respectability. Lewis (2004) conceptualizes Black masculinity as a phenomenon constituted by a set of practices and ideological position by which men become conscious of themselves. He claims that masculinity is acting out of maleness. In results, masculinity or femininity is not reduced to simply understanding what one is, moreover, is about enactment (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

Black scholars suggest a holistic examination of black manhood by integrating the particular aspects to which Black people have been subjected to, and that, to this day, continue to impact the life of Black people (Jackson & Balaji, 2011). They all coincide that a better understanding of Black masculinity can only be attained when it is analyzed through the intersectionality of race, gender, culture, religion, class, and sexuality (Gordon & Heneri, 2014; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016; hooks, 2004). Gordon (1997) suggests the need to undertake a dynamic and phenomenological approach that would enable a rich and varied theorization on Black male repertoire. He claims, “Close attention must be given to the historical and contemporary interaction between structures of dominance and the (re)production of African Male cultural (re)presentation” (36). Therefore, I continue this

paper by examining Creole men's self-representation. This section provides insight into understanding what it means to be a Black man in antiblack multicultural context, and the ways Creole men navigate these spaces.

Chapter Two: The self and the other, what does it means to be a Black Man?

Remembering our Ancestors, Embracing our Identity, and the Longstanding Fight Against Racial Discrimination.

Don't care where you come from, as long as you are a black man you're an African.

No mind your nationality, you got an identity of an African.

Cause if you come from Clarendon
And if you come from Portland
And if you come from Westmoreland
You're an African.

Don't matter where you come from, as long as you are a black man you're an African.

No mind your nationality, you got an identity of an African.

Cause if you come from Trinidad
And if you come from Nassau
And if you come from Cuba,
You're an African.

So, don't care where you come from, as long as you are a black man you're an African.

No mind your nationality, you got an identity of an African.

So in your plexion high, high, high
If your complexion is low, low
And if your plexion in between, you're an African...

Peter Tosh. African.
Album: Equal Rights, 1977

When gender is intersected with race, what do Creole men think of their manhood?

Nicaragua is a multicultural and multilingual nation. Bluefields, located on the southeast Caribbean Coast, is a city that represents this cultural diversity very well. It has a population of 45,547 (2005) and its inhabitants are mostly Mestizo (Indio-Hispano), Afro-descendant Creoles, and indigenous Miskito. Unfortunately, the latest census does not reflect the statistical distribution by ethnic group. Nevertheless, Mestizos have become the majority (PNUD, 2005). Creoles often refer to what Bluefields used to be like before the Mestizos' invasion. They are conscious of the sociodemographic changes and its effect in the Black community.

When I was growing up, at that time we the Black was majority here in Bluefields. Now we not majority, and well this bring a lot of negative situation to Black people here. Them Indian⁷ come and invade us, and them want do what them want because them is the majority.

Mr. Frank interview, 2017

The following excerpts of my conversations with Creole men provide meaningful insights regarding what it means to be a Black man in a multicultural context.

Well when we say that we are black man, it refer us back to our heritage, our origin. That take us back to our history. I always remember this song, but I don't remember

⁷ Word use in a derogatory way to remind the mestizos are Indigenous, although they think of themselves as Spaniard/White.

the songster, he always use to sing this song, no matta {matter} where you come from, even though you are a Black man, you are an African. So, Ok. *we try to remember* our heritage. So being a black man is to remember that we come from slavery. So, call me Black. I don't even like mestizos calling me moreno [brown]. And Creole is more because of the language, because as we black and speak Kriol, that is how we call our language. So yes, I am Creole because I speak Kriol.

Mr. Patrick interview, 2017

“Yes, I am a black man, we talk creole. I don't like people calling me Moreno. Call me black or Creole. Because Creole is Black. No moreno thing because my surname is not Moreno [mestizo surname]. Over the years I meet up with a lot of discrimination. In Managua when I go to the market and them call me negrito [diminutive of black] back then it use to be the biggest offense. So one time I went and them calling negrito por aqui, negrito por alla [calling me negrito here and there], and I told the person thank you for identifying me for who I am. And she said, what you no get offended? And I said for what? ent I Black.”

Mr. Andrew interview 2017

Mr. Patrick and Mr. Andrew's accounts are intimately related in that they describe their black identity through the lens of African heritage and slavery. In the case of the Creole, very little has been written of our ancestors. For more than a century the Nicaraguan government has focused on the history of the Pacific coast and has erased the history of the Caribbean Coast. As asserted by Trouillot (1995), to make a slave, slave owner ripped the enslaved from their memories of Africa (their home). After slavery, those who profited from it, tried to erase every evidence in order to have Black people forget that past; “without a past Black people have no life to avenge”. Additionally, in a context where Blackness is neglected and treated as the other, Creoles tried to distance themselves from blackness and slavery (Gordon, 1998). Consequently, Creoles ceased sharing the oral history of slavery and African ancestry. When Mr. Patrick uses the expression “we try to remember our heritage,” he is denoting that reminiscences of our ancestors are fragmented.

Unfortunately, we are unable to name or to narrate precise events lived and performed by our ancestors. However, in the discourses provided by Creole men, two things remained intact: Africa and slavery. Interestingly Mr. Patrick recalled the phrase “Don’t care where you come from, as long as you are a black man you’re an African⁸” to explain his racial identity. This demonstrates the existence of a Black diasporic identity and the ways Black Rastafarian reggae music, in particular, has a transnational impact in reaffirming Black identity throughout Caribbean societies.

Perhaps in a less elaborated, and yet significant way, younger Creole men explain their understanding of Black identity, along with the ways this shapes their experiences. While acknowledging his blackness, contrary to what was stated by older men, Dean explicates that although Creole means Black, to distance himself from blackness, and consequently, from slavery, he prefers to be called Creole. He rationalizes that the word Creole mean a “mixture of races.” Dean’s expression is indicative of the existence of internalized racism in the Black community of Bluefields. As denoted by Woods (2005) Creoles believe in “uplifting the race” by mixture. Physical features such as light skinned and “soft” hair is highly appreciated and understood as beautiful.

Adam’s explanation highlights the phenotypic characteristics of Black people and the ways Mestizos use these to create derogative phrases to offend Creoles. Just as Mr. Franklyn and Mr. Andrew, Adam also emphasized the use of the Kriol⁹ language as an

⁸ These lyrics are a portion of a song called Written and performed by Peter Tosh (1944-1987), a Jamaican reggae artist who identified himself as Rasta.

⁹ Creole denote ethnic/racial identity. Kriol refers to the language.

important component of Creoles' identity. Many Creoles, including specialists in linguistics, asserts that speaking Kriol is the best way of resistance in the face of mestizos' various forms of oppression. "*Kriol iz wii language let'z wii zpeak it*" is the slogan implemented by the URACCAN¹⁰ university to promote the appreciation of Kriol. While it resonates positively in the hearts of many, others condemn it and believe Creoles should aspire to master "standard English" in order to advance the race. They claim that promoting the use of Kriol situate Blacks as a people without a language. Additionally, many Creoles struggle to speak the "standard Spanish" imposed by Nicaragua. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Kriol language is an essential component of Creoles' identity.

To be a Black mean that you skin color is dark, so yea, Creole is Black. But well I prefer the word Creole because you would say that black people are not accepted because they are related to Africa, to slavery. and well Creole is mixture in a way with another race. Like not completely 100% black.

Dean interview, 2017

A black man is a person of dark color, dry hear [kinky], broad nose, thick lips, strong body. Jajajajaja. That talk English but in another {another} kind of way. We call it Kriol. And well, sometimes you have people, most the Spanish speaking people, them see you as somebody inferior to them. Them feel that because you black you kiant {can't} have a high position [in society]. And that is discrimination. Them like tell you all kind of things, like negro pijul [looking like black beans], and all kind of names they like give you because of the color of you skin.

Adam interview, 2017

Mr. Aaron's accounts provide a different approach to internalized racism. While denoting that he is a proud Black man, he speaks of the various ways Black peoples' attitudes and behaviors contribute to the degradation of the race; a situation he termed as

¹⁰ University of the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua. A local university founded in 1995.

“self-discrimination.” He highlights that many belonging to the Black race enact negative behaviors that confirms the existing stereotypes about Black people. He concludes by affirming that Black peoples’ problem is their attitude, not the color of their skin. In his view, Black people are responsible for their own predicament. In other words, the lack of “appropriate behavior” is an act of self-discrimination. I also want us to note that Mr. Aaron’s explanations speak to the Black Diaspora as a whole, and not solely of Creoles in Bluefields.

Look, you see the color of my skin, I no shame to say I Black. And, well, some people want call me brown skin, but I no brown, I Black. The problem is not the color of you skin, the problem is you attitude. sometimes we black people go doing things that put down the race you know, and when we do that we discriminate we self. Everybody like to see them race high, and here I no trying to be racist, but you feel good when you see a black man get promotion in a job, or in sport, heheheh... I feel nice. For example, when on the TV. you watching the champion fight and I see the Black man fighting, I want that black man win! Just because him black, and when the black man lose the fight, you feel sad...”

Mr. Aaron interview, 2017

Creole men also believe that they are perceived as inferior beings by the mestizos. This situation is manifested through the limited access to positions of authority. Gordon (1998) asserts that with the annexation of the Mosquitia to Nicaragua, Mestizos treated Black as savages incapable of governing themselves. Creole men who at the time occupied governmental positions in Bluefields, were replaced by appointed “prominent Mestizos” capable of keeping control over the new colony. Since then, Creoles are engaged in a constant struggle to prove their intellectual capacity. After years of resistance and negotiation, in 1987 the Nicaraguan state approved the Law of Autonomy, which recognizes Nicaragua as a multicultural country inhabited by Indigenous, Afrodescendant and Mestizos communities. It also gives Coast people the right to govern themselves and

administrate their natural resources. While most of the law continues to be unaccomplished, Creole and Indigenous people have been able to gain some important spaces at a governmental level (Goett, 2017; Gordon, 1998; Hooker, 2005; Morris, 2012). Nevertheless, as the Mestizo population continues to grow and invade, they maintain a larger number of seats in the Regional Counsel¹¹.

Additionally, Mr. Frank remarks that Black men live under the scourge of being perceived as criminals, specifically regarding narcotics selling in connection with international drugs mafia. Because of its geographical position, the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua is utilized as a platform for international drug traffic (INCSR, 2016). Consequently, The US government established collaboration with the Nicaraguan State to combat drugs trade. In these processes, Black people, and Black men in particular, are all suspects of being involved in these type of illicit activities (Goett, 2015, 2017). Mr. Frank exposes the practice of institutionalized racism covered under the war on drug. As a result, Bluefields' prison is largely populated by Black men who have been accused of drugs crimes. In November of 2017, the Nicaraguan government inaugurated the “Newest and Most Modern Penitentiary System in the country” with money seized from international drugs trafficking (Martha Vásquez, 2014; “Nuevo Centro Penitenciario en Bluefields | Metro,” 2017). The construction of a large maximum-security prison located in Bluefields

¹¹ The Regional Council is the highest instance of authority in the autonomous regions of Nicaragua consisting of forty-five members. They have the obligation to direct, coordinate and implement processes of economic, social, and political development to ensure sustainable human development and to improve the quality of life of indigenous peoples, ethnic communities (mestizos) and afro descendants of the region.

indicates that the war on drugs will continue to be a priority. Therefore, Black men will remain suspects and the main targets of law enforcement. I argue that that the war on drug initiated in the US, which Alexander (2010) theorizes so well, has a transnational effect in the Black diaspora. It is to note that Mr. Patrick explanations also includes the diasporic relation regarding black men being criminalized by police and law enforcement.

“I remember travelling from the airport here in Bluefields to Managua, I was going to my daughter graduation. Here at the airport the police stop me and ask me for my documents. And I say, I born and grow up here, why I have to show documents? All of you work here know me. Them time I use to work on ship, and one guy came out and say hey that’s Frank, he is one of us. when I reach to Managua, the police pull me out again, at that time my friend Bennet was accompanying me and they call us in a room and search us from top to bottom, and they ask where we were going? so I say, we going to my daughter graduation, and he is my friend accompanying me. And them said, where you get the money to travel by plane? And I guess that by the way we were dress, they suspected that we sell drugs. We were dressed in jacket suit because we were going direct to the graduation. And them ask us how much money we have on us? and they search our wallets. Then them still ask, you sure you are not on drugs? That is discrimination because what they saying is that the only way black man can get money is by being narcotrafficker. Here you could see Mestizos going from here to Rama, then the naval [military] let them pass. But as them see Black people looking a little presentable them search them. I’ve seen this happen right here at the wharf. Then the naval say them searching “randomly” (hand motioning apostrophe sign). But when you notice, them only searching the Black people. I don’t see them doing that in the pacific, searching mestizos who going from Managua to Masaya, or from Managua to Leon. There is a stereotype that all black men are in drugs. This is like what happened in the US in the sixties, if a White man is running 6 o’clock in the morning is because he is making exercise, if he Black man is running at that same hour is because he thief something or he is running away from the police. So you see? That is what we live here in Bluefields, even if you not in that, them still treat you as criminal.”

Mr. Frank interview, 2017

In the following quote, Mr. Aaron explains that during the 1960’s mestizos enacted various forms of individual racisms on a day-to-day basis. He asserts that although racial

segregation was not determined by law, there was a strict dividing line between Blacks and Mestizos; Black people resided in specific areas¹², and Mestizos created their own neighborhoods. Mr. Aaron emphasizes that biracial marriage was not accepted. Nevertheless, he believes that racism has gradually declined. In his opinion, racial discrimination has decrease significantly. Evidence of this is the existence of racial diverse neighborhoods. Additionally, he proudly underlines the sexual interest of the mestiza women in Black men.

Look, make I tell you. In the early 1960's when we use to study. Them had one Hogar School in front the San Jose. And I rememba {remember} that I couldn't touch one Spanish gial {girl} hand. She will hall off that had and shout out: *deja hediendo come coco!* [leave me in peace stinky coconut eater!]. And if you touch a mestiza hand for some activity in class, them go brush off them hand and wash it. We had a division, even in the recess time I kiant {can't} play with the Spanish people. You had to look you own, and if no other black there, you alone. Discrimination was full years ago. Even the neighborhoods was divided. And it gone, that even you girlfriend have to be Black... well I see a big difference now. Now we have mix neighborhoods. Now we see a lot a black people married to Spanish. And you see a lot of black man looking to have relation with Spanish woman, and well I see plenty Spanish gial {girls} want be with "El moreno" (expressed with a smile of pride and satisfaction).

Mr. Aaron interview, 2017

Within this frame, I want to take up a discussion regarding race and ethnicity to explain why in Nicaragua multiculturality and interculturality are common terms often used to claim the non-existence of racial discrimination, or rather an apparent decrease of racial discrimination. Omi and Winant (2015), elucidate that ethnicity theory emerged in the 1920s as a challenge to the biologist and social Darwinist conception of race which affirmed White superiority and considered other skin color as exotic mutations. Ethnicity

¹² Cotton Tree, Point Teen, Beholden and Old Bank are the oldest neighborhoods of Bluefields, founded by black people.

is defined as a group formation process based on two components: culture and descent. In a simplified way, culture is defined as a set of customs and habitual practices, belief, religion, values, language etc. which configures members everyday existence; Additionally, descent involves racial heritage, phenotype, and origin.

The term ethnicity is used to highlights peoples' cultural traits and to suppress racial features. Facilitating, therefore, the establishment of the paradigm of multiculturalism, or cultural pluralism which is basically the recognition of various cultural groups. Ethnicity also enables the insertion of the term interculturalism which refers to the exchange of cultures and cultural assimilation. In other words, it allows one cultural group to adopt from others those cultural expressions that they find to be appealing, and to simultaneously ignore anything explicitly related to race. This results in the indiscernibility or racial discriminatory acts and causes people to believe that multicultural and intercultural paradigms are the solution to racial discrimination.

In the case of Bluefields, most mestizos have adopted some of the Creoles' cultural expressions (mainly in gastronomy and folklore) to call themselves Mestizos Costeños to distinguished themselves from Mestizos residing in the center and west areas of the country. Nevertheless, when issues related to Black people access to education, jobs opportunities, and other basic services are being discussed, Mestizos pushback intensively by claiming that those circumstances have nothing to do with race and that in fact, in Nicaragua we do not have racial categories only ethnic groups (various forms cultural mixture). My analysis leads me to argue that ethnicity theory does not allow honest conversations related to racial inequality, racial discrimination, and racial injustices. It

contributes to the invisibility of the existence of racial discrimination and it causes many people to believe that we are indeed in a genuine era of color blindness.

To be Black and Man is a combination of hardship and privilege.

Mr. Beto's explanations regarding being a Black man in Bluefields informs us how blackness and manhood situates Black men in a position of hardship and privilege simultaneously. The first denotes that in order to achieve their goals Black men are forced to work harder than men belonging to other ethnic groups. The latter explains that Black men take advantage of being stereotyped as "hypersexual," to access women of different ethnicities. Within this frame, Mr. Beto describes Black men as hard workers and passionate lovers.

"The challenges that we go through as Black men are different than other ethnic group. We have to work harder than others to obtain our goals, even if they claim that is not true. When we go to Managua the capital we find racist phrases coming from children. They call us Black bird, and negro pijul because that is what they were taught. The people that discriminate us know us as hard workers, they know us as people able to achieve. They understand that once we achieve nothing could stop us. As you can see sport is one of the area where black man have been successful. Even in business, if a black man get into business he is able to achieve no matter what. So, we become a threat to a lot of people. Yes they recognize our abilities, and yes, they also discriminate us. But we are achievers. So in that sense is hard to be a black man. In spite of that, I believe that we still have some status. Even if some may not agree with me I think black men still have a certain status in Bluefields even among the black woman and the other races as well. I would say Blackness give men privilege, and manhood give men privilege. It give sexual status too, I consider that a privilege. I can't speak for the mestizo or anyone else, but when you speak to women of other ethnic group they will tell you that black men are very intense when it comes to love. When I say that we are passionate, I mean that we love intensively when it comes to the sexual part. And that get us through the romance door much faster than much men in Nicaragua. So, you see, is a combination of things I talking about."

I want to note that when Mr. Beto is describing Black men privilege, he focuses on the ways this asserts their manhood in relation to mestizo and indigenous men. This “accomplishment” produce a sense of satisfaction. He does not seem to be conscious of the ways Black men use this privilege to oppress others, and in particular, to oppress Black women and children. Mr. Beto notes that Black men have no problem in being considered “sexual machines.” On the contrary, he is proud to highlight that Black men use those ideas to their advantage. In relation to this, Robert Jensen (as cited by hooks, 2004) argues that Black men embraces notions of “patriarchal sex,” which provide them the freedom to expresses sexual advances to women and to control romantic relationship according to their own needs. Having various sexual partners and infidelity from men is considered normal. In patriarchal society, Black men assert their “manhood” through conquest and sexual intercourse with women (Charleston, 2014; Gordon, 1997; Johnson, 2014; Wilson, 1969).

Anthony, who is a taxi driver, in his early thirties, and is married to a mestiza woman, rationalizes his romantic choices by assuring that choosing a romantic partner of a race other than his own is just a matter of taste. Interestingly, although the motivations are intimately related to notions of Black being ugly and White being pretty, which speak of his internalized self-hatred, he dismisses the idea that there is a racist component behind his decision. Additionally, his reasonings includes the long-standing stereotype that depict Creole females as greedy and womanish, compared to the mestiza whom greatest virtue is her “humble character.”

So make I tell you now. Three years ago, I married a mestiza woman because I kian't {can't} see myself waking up every morning with a woman with dry natty hear just like mine. And I know you going think that I racist, but no, I no racist, is just that I like clear skin woman, I like soft hear woman. And I have a cousin, she like her white man too. She no wa {want} nothing with black man. I think is all about gusto [taste], is about what you like and what you no like. And I going tell you the truth, but no get bexed {vexed}. Mestiza woman humbler than the Black woman. Them black woman here, them no wa {want} do the things fa {for} you, but them ready to spend out you money. Them wa {want} everything up to date, clothes, shoe, purse, perfume, wig, pretty house, pretty car, eat pretty food everyday...

Anthony, interview, 2017

As can be noted, Creole men highlight Black men sexual power to attract the mestiza women. Nevertheless, it is Kenneth, a baseball player in his mid-thirties, and hold a job with the government, who provides an interesting, and yet complex explanation of Creole men's fascination towards the mestiza woman.

Every day as Black man you struggle out there you know. This happen in different environments, at a social level. At work for example, there you have to prove that you worth to be there, but the mestizo man no have to prove a shit. I still have mestizo people calling me "negro" in a very disrespectful way, and them tell you that fa {for} you feel bad, and feel less, and all of that. So, the material things you get, houses, car, land, be in busyness, will help you prove yourself {yourself} and to make people respect you. And well, yes having more than one woman, even if you broke [having no money] because them no have to know that you broke, and if you sexually involve with a mestizo wife just to show the mestizo man that his woman have interest in you, and that you can take her away from him when you want, that is the best way to take revenge because these mestizo man have to learn to respect you. And well, mestizas know Black man sexual capacity. I hear them talking that them more sexually satisfy with a Black man than with the mestizo. So, mestizo man must learn to respect the Black man.

Kenneth interview, 2017

Kenneth asserts that in Bluefields, Black men are perceived as inferior beings. They constantly struggle to prove their intellectual capacity. He emphasizes that the power to access the mestiza female body becomes the tool by which they can force the mestizo men

to respect Black men. This positionality connotes a repressed feeling of revenge due to the various forms of oppression enacted by mestizo to subjugate Black men. In describing a Martinican Black man, Fanon (1968) affirms that their appetite for the white woman arises more out of sentiments of “proud revenge,” rather than pure love. The author claims that this is the result of desiring that which was forbidden to Black men for so long. When a Black man establishes a romantic relationship with a white woman, her body is in service to his will and desires. This provides him a sense of gratification and achievement. Johnson (2014) claims that male control over women is used as a vehicle to demonstrate, enhance, and protect their manhood. Nevertheless, beyond controlling women, patriarchy promotes men to compete against each other for the power to subjugate other men at whatever cost or means. As illustrated by Keneth, his final goal to is force the mestizo men to respect his manhood.

So, What Is So Particular About Black Men After All? Well, Everything!

When speaking to Creole men about the characteristics particular to Black men that distinguish them from others, their answer was a basic “*we are the best in everything.*” Creole men portray themselves as *hardworking, family oriented, highly religious, psychically stronger, proud, best in sports, best singers, best dancer, better providers, best in dressing, highly competitive and best lovers.* In addition, they claim that Creole men are the ones sustaining Bluefields’ economy (period). In the following quotations we are able to identify the ways Creole men explains their uniqueness.

One thing about Black man, we feel good and we love to dress good. For example, when we Black people having funeral you can know. When a Mestizo die you have maybe only 4 people to the funeral, when a Black person die, you have the whole

street full of Black people, and there Black man going dress up with that jacket suit and be up to date. And when you pass by them, that perfume strong. But when you pass by a mestizo, you no smell nothing. I think, well, that is part of our culture. We know that we mix with Jamaican and Cayman people, so we share that in common, and we grow up with that. I rememba {remember} my papa, him use to drive a chuck fa {for} la Nica¹³ them times. But when time to go to the famous theater my papa use to go in the night and when him dress up... Jajajajaja. So, we see that. And the north American stuff use to always come here when the Bluff was the port here, I use to order things. I use to have one time that I pass walking and afte {after} one block you still smelling me. Jajajajaja. So, it become like a custom...

Mr. Aaron interview 2017

Well, I think the Black man try to have more material things than others. You notice when a Spanish speaking person have a business, them would sell the things them cheap because them want to sell. But the Black man want to get rich before time, so he would sell expensive. I mean that Black man head-on to riches fast. The other ones them want to move up too, but them take them time to climb up. And that is what cause us in a big problem today, drugs affair. When you notice, yes, the Spaniard into it, and we have Miskito into it, but who are the one catch by the police? The Black people, and why? because we want to get rich fast. And is not everybody, but some doing it, and when them have, then them think, no body like me! I am a man! You see, and that is a big problem that we have. Also, what make us different and I talk to black boys about this, they figure that having more than one girlfriend or more than one woman make them a man. That is what many of these boys think. Ok. Then we have sport that plays a big role too, we use it to show that we stronger than the rest. The other thing too is in dancing, you know like if we born with it. Is Something's that is burning in our soul, you just want to move. And we can see that even our children coming up with that. Many of these little children when them having a party, and the mestizo dancing they would say aaah, them kiant {can't} dance... We Black men good in singing to. You go into several of the Black communities, is just if they were born with it. And you go to church, this one signing alto, the other one singing... and they never been train for it. But it seems like they born it.

Mr. Patrick interview, 2017

Here in Bluefields Black man is very proud and he always want to try to have the best things. So is all about image. Black man want have a nice pretty house. Here in Bluefields you want to have a car, send you children to the best university, and feel proud of them. The majority of Black men are family oriented, so them want

¹³ Líneas Aéreas de Nicaragua (LANICA), was a Nicaraguan airline which operated within South and Central America, and the United States, and offered domestic flight to the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua.

keep a family together, them also like keeping close to them mama and papa. You may have little differences, yes, but they are very family oriented. Spiritually, Black men follow the traditional roots that parents transmit to you. For example, if you are a Moravian most of the time the children is Moravian too. Sport is also another particularity. Black man body is the prototype for sport. His body is build for sport. The traditional sports that we have here is baseball and basketball, boxing, and most recently football too. we are not the majority in population, but when it comes to sport, more Black men are involved in sports. I think that the *ship-out* thing is something particular for black man too. So black man take that option more than mestizos and indigenou. You see, *ship-out* give you the possibility of getting a nice house. Most of the time we want everything at the same time, we don't understand that we have to live according to our best possibilities.

Mr. Frank interview, 2017

Here in Bluefields, them like say Black man lazy. That is a prejudice label that was placed upon Black men mostly from the mestizo. They call us so based on a minority of Black men who walk the street, but based on my experience, and the facts speak for itself because when you ask about the economy in Bluefields what you going find is that the remesa (remittance) that are sent to Black families is a lot higher than most ethnic groups. And who are the ones sending this money? another set of Black people who are from Bluefields who working their behind to help their families. So, them look only on the few Black men that don't do much. Before 1979¹⁴ Black men took care of their families without having to leave Bluefields. But after 1979 people started to migrate because of the inability to take care of their families. The fact that we went through a war, and business opportunities start closing down in Bluefields, then a lot of Black men, and Black families had to migrate outside of Nicaragua to find opportunities to be able to help the families. Therefore, it affects the Black families up to today. One of the buy product of that situation is infidelity. Someone would say, is that the only reason? Not necessarily, because infidelity of Black men and Black women were still high in the 70's even before the ship-out. Even if that was the huge public secret. Yes, infidelity was high, and is still high because of ship-out, and by no means is an attack on the Black women neither, or the partners of those Black men. I could also understand that lonesomeness is a hell. So weaknesses occurs, and those are some of the sacrifices that Black men have to pay, a high price that black men had have to pay. So, when you look at it, Black men is who have Bluefields develop to what it is today... And if you want to compare a Black man with the Miskito; Miskito man tend to be somehow more domesticated, they are more calm. Black men are more forceful. We tend to be a little bit more aggressive and competitive. The Miskito, or the Ramas, and the Ulwas don't tend to be so aggressive. And well the Garifuna people

¹⁴ The Nicaraguan revolution of 1979 resulted in a civil war and the economic embargo imposed by the US.

are Black too. You may find some who are passive, but some are forceful just as the Creole.

Mr. Beto interview, 2017

As can be noted, Creole men emphasize that working on cruise ship is also a particularity of Black men in Bluefields. I always heard that the “*ship-out phenomenon*” has devastated and continue to devastate Black families. I’ve always heard that contrary to the Mestizo and Indigenous men, who are depicted as family-oriented, Black men leave their families in pursuit of better jobs outside of the country. Consequently, since this pattern differs significantly from Mestizos patriarchal notions, Black men are not considered to be family oriented. Nevertheless, Creole men affirm that they are indeed family oriented. From their perspective, in the absence of job opportunities, the precise act of opting to work outside of the country to provide shelter, food, and education for their children is a genuine family-oriented act. Most Creole men reaffirm that this is not a question of love, because after all “you kiant {can’t} eat love.” Moreover, this is a matter of necessity and survival which requires some sacrifices.

Interestingly, Mr. Beto opted to state that although “*ship-out men*” are able to fulfill their responsibilities as providers, and in addition are owners of the finest houses in Bluefields, this has been done at a high cost. I thought he wanted to highlight the socioemotional effects on children and family dynamics. However, that was not the case. The high cost paid by the “*ship-out men*,” according to Mr. Beto, is that they are victims of wife’s infidelity. Once again, patriarchy makes the claim that women are supposed to be loyal to their husbands. It is accepted for men to engage with several sexual partners and to boast of their ability to seduce women (Wilson, 1969). As it is said in Bluefields,

“ship-out man, is not man of one woman.” A woman unfaithfulness to a man is understood as the highest act of dishonor. Her unfaithfulness exposes his lack of power to maintain and control her sexuality. Therefore, his authority is placed in doubt. When thinking of ship-out men wife’s unfaithfulness, a question that emerges is: who are they being unfaithful with? As suggested by Goett (2017), the *soft-hand* man (known by others as the sweet-man), provide the lonely woman with sexual gratification in the absence of the hard-working husband. Additionally, they enjoy the commodities provided by another man.

Creole Men and Formal Education.

“Creole men don’t like to study” is a common phrase often used by both Creoles and Mestizos school teachers. In my conversations with Creole men, they often highlighted their interest in providing their children with the best education possible. Nevertheless, when identifying Creole men’s particularities, they did not refer to themselves as “best students.” So, I asked, What about Black men and studies?

Unfortunately, and I have to say unfortunately we are very behind time. The Miskito and the Ramas, they get the opportunity to study, with all the difficulties and struggles them attend class. But Black man, as the first opposition, you take back and leave. You see, is all about the economic situation. Black man usually think on the moment, and take quick decisions. They go ship-out, call center, and unfortunately drugs. We can’t ignore that. and drug is not only a Black man problem. The thing is that Black man think on getting quick money. When you think of fast money, soon or late you going get catch up into that. I no know what it is. Why we no embrace the two universities¹⁵ here and study? is truth that we are minority but as I said before we are good in sport and they don’t embrace that skill to get a scholarship in Managua. But that fast money is something else. The other thing is that a lot of Black man, even if them didn’t go university they try to send

¹⁵ The Bluefields Indian and Caribbean University (BICU), and the University of the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua (URACCAN).

them children, like to give their children what their parents could not afford at the time. But I hear some of my friends say, I give them everything but if them no want to embrace the opportunity, I kiant {can't} force them, is up to them. Here we have a lot of parents that think that way and I think that there is where we fail. We no insist with our children. We want them to be successful, but them no insist with their children. Personally, I don't think that is the right thing to do as parents, but that is the reality.

Mr. Frank interview, 2017

As asserted by Mr. Frank, Black boys' involvement in studies in very low. Although he claimed that he do not understand why they are not taking advantage of the two universities established in Bluefields, his explanation provides a reasonable answer. The availability of jobs that demand professional training is scarce. After obtaining a university degree, the possibilities of getting a job related to that career are low, and for most unrealistic. Creoles are forced to compete against Mestizos for the few jobs available in which the basic requirements are to be fluent in the Spanish language and to have an appropriate presentation. In the eyes of the mestizos who occupy most of the executive positions, most Black boys do not comply with these criteria. Additionally, wages are extremely low¹⁶. As result, most Black boys prefer to graduate from high school and choose jobs that do not demand a high educational level, and simultaneously guarantee a certain financial stability. Working on cruise ships and call centers are the leading options.

Afro-descendant leaders are concerned that Creoles are not taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the local universities, especially when considering that previous to the year 1990, after completing secondary education, Black people had to migrate to

¹⁶ In Nicaragua the minimum wage depending on the type of labor varies from \$150 to \$250.

Managua and Leon in order to study at the national universities. Not able to undertake those expenses, most Creole did not advance their studies. The few that succeeded, returned to Bluefields and played a central role in the creation of the BICU and URACCAN universities. Nevertheless, Black men high migration rates allow Afro-descendant women to taken advantage of these spaces and to advance their academic level. This situations also enable them to hold a few important positions in NGOs, government agencies, and educational institutions (Morris, 2010). Unfortunately, the present situation reveals that although most Creoles girls are targeting higher education, because of the country's financial crisis, a large number of girls are also choosing to work either on *cruise ships* or at *call centers* (in Managua) rather than pursuing a professional career. As stated by most young Creoles "It make no sense to study if to the end of the day you kiant {can't} find a decent job, and you still have to migrate." This context reveals the paradoxes between the value of earning a degree vis-à-vis the viable mechanisms to obtaining financial stability.

Lastly, I asked, Are Creole Men *Machistas*? "Yes, but just a little."

Creole men do not consider themselves to be *machistas* in the whole sense of the word. They affirm that the "real machistas are the Mestizos and the Indigenous men" because they report higher rates of intimate partner violence. Creole men rationalize that their male centered ideology is a result of the ways they were brought up in their homes. Nevertheless, they consider that this training was not intended to promote physical violence towards women. On the contrary, it is about providing protection to a weaker and fragile being. Creole men's discourse in relation to machismo reaffirms the myth that Blacks do

not enact intimate partner violence. It seems to be that, as long as issues of this nature are not reported to the police department, then it simply does not exist.

It is to note that Creole men's discourses connote a dose of benevolent patriarchy vis-à-vis Mestizos and Indigenous' oppressive patriarchy. hooks (2004), defines benevolent patriarchy as men's exercise of power to subjugate others without implementing physical violence. The absence of corporal aggression does not dismiss the fact that benevolent patriarchy is executed through manipulation and intimidation.

You see, back then, many of our parents were trained from the home in a sense that the man is the head, and the provider, and the woman have to submit and stay home. So that is what build us up to what we are today as men. Even though them interpret that as, how them call it? Machismo. So, you see that was the way we were brought up. That is what make us. Like for example, I am a Black man, and the time come when I get married, So, you see, if my wife want to work out of the house or whatever, while I working, then, I no see it that way. I learn that the lady stay home, tend to the children, prepare the food. And the man is the one to do the hard work, but in that sense. Is not to say in a sense to put down the woman, overdo the woman. Is to show that the woman is more fragile, them need to be taken care of, we the men need to do the hard work. So that is what we came to be today even though now ladies come to that position that they want to be at the same level with man.

Mr. Patrick interview 2017

Look, the paña machete mestizo is the real machista here. Them like beat up them woman, beat up them wife with hamma {hammer}, use them knife or machete to cut up the woman face, them hand, and some even kill them without mercy. The Indian miskito them, them beat up them woman too, every day if possible, that is in their culture. But you no going hear Black man chopping up them wife or killing them woman. We only we want our woman to respect us, that is all. Because to the end of the day, we still have to provide.

Kenneth interview 2017.

I was not astonished to hear the rhetoric that Mestizos and Indigenous possess a higher degree of chauvinism and misogynistic behaviors. Nevertheless, Mr. Beto and Mr. Frank's explanations offers insights into understanding Creole levels of *machismo*. First,

it denotes that Creole men lack understanding regarding feminist movements and their reason for being.

Secondly, they believe that machismo is inherent to their manhood. By asking, if you take away machismo from a man, then what you got? Meaning, if you take away a man's male ego, then what would he be? The implicit answer posed by Mr. Beto suggest that a man without his male ego (macho character) or his male pride is not a man at all. That human being is simply something of another nature; perhaps a woman in a man's body, a gay, a homosexual. Another important aspect that I want us to note is Creoles' ambiguous understanding of the meaning of machismo. For some machismo is reduced to an act of physical aggression towards a woman. They undermine expressions of verbal violence or patrimonial violence. Interestingly, sexual violence was not mentioned at all in my conversations with Creole men. Moreover, for many, being *machistas* does not denote a negative characteristic because in they believe that *machismos* is a feature inherent of their maleness.

Lastly, I argue that when Creole men assert that rather than being a solution to gendered violence, by "attacking men" feminist are contributing to intensifying male anger and resistance, which then results in an increase of aggression toward women, they are indeed exposing the nature of Creoles' chauvinistic belief. This is also another characteristic of patriarchal societies that typify women as always responsible for their own predicament.

Well chauvinism have always being a problem in black men. It is a huge problem because Black woman was also engrained with biblical teaching that the man is the head of the house hold. But my concern is, if you take away the manhood from the

man, then what you got? Because machismo come as part of the man, just as feminism come as part of the woman, and a lot of woman feel proud of that feminism. why can't a man feel good about his machismo too? And I think You can be a macho without being a chauvinist, without beating up women.

Mr. Beto interview, 2017

Machismo is something that we are still living today, independently of all the movements to liberate the women from the machismo. Unfortunately, the same organizations that supposedly are there to rectify that machismo situation with the men, they tend to strengthen the machismo because you as man, when you hear them attacking you, is just then that you get tougher. Is just like when at home you beat children, that no help them but make them tougher. Sometimes machistas go biblical, man is the head of the home, that part we accept. But then when it comes to sharing responsibilities in the home we close up on that. I was one that used to say, once I put the money in the home everything is all right. And when I reach home I want my food ready, not taking in consideration what the woman was passing through, what kind of day she had. You know that when you work in the house is harder than working out of the house, because there you work outside the home you work 8 hours, but at home you work 24/7 especially when you have children. So, what a lady pass through is very difficult. So, the machismo is when the man put himself on top, not on the side as how the Bible say, but on top of the woman, and whatever he says goes.

Mr. Frank interview, 2017

Creole men are immersed in a “multicultural patriarchal society” in which, supposedly, all men are equal. Nevertheless, Creoles highlight the various forms of institutional and individual racisms they confront. It all suggest that they understand their positionality as Black men and proving their worth and manhood is an everyday task in their interactions with mestizos. One of the fundamental ways Creole men assert their manhood is in the sexual sphere by utilizing the myth that Black men's sexual power is of a higher level compared to other men.

Conclusions

Creole men's experiences in the construction of their manhood exemplify the complex processes and dynamics that occur at a family and societal level that generate the formation of gendered identities. Creole masculinity is based on hegemonic patriarchal respectability, which is constructed through the assimilation of gender-based behaviors facilitated by processes of inculcation and emulation in interaction with their parents, family, church, school, and neighbors until it became a normalized behavior. These notions, symbols, and values, as they continue to be reproduced, are transmitted from generation to generation. This suggests that collective parenting and social pressure are implemented to regulate and instill "appropriate manly performances." Although it appears to be that Black women play an active role in the establishment of Creole patriarchy, I argue that Creole men exert control over child rearing by monitoring and correcting female strategies of raising their sons.

It is important to note that although Creole men recognize that manhood is a learned process in interactions with family and community, their understanding of what scholars conceptualized as "gendered roles" is defined by the word "responsibilities." From this perspective, women and men are to comply with various responsibilities that are understood to be intrinsic to their biological sex. It does not occur to them that notions and enactment of manhood can be deconstructed and/or reconstructed. Moreover, I argue that through processes of assimilations of patriarchal respectability, notions of hegemonic masculinity are encrusted in their psyche in ways that cannot easily be changed. Consequently, efforts directed to disrupt patriarchy and normalized manhood behavior are

confronted by male self-preservation which does not allow an open conversation to admitting other forms of masculinities. This is fundamentally important because, in Nicaragua, non-governmental organizations attempt to persuade men to change male aggressive behavior by emphasizing that “gender is a social construct.” There is a belief that men and woman automatically understand this concept and will simply change when they decide to do so. This is far from the reality. We need to be conscious that Black men notions and enactment of masculinity have a historical, political, and social background rooted in patriarchy. ONG’s continue to attack the symptom, and not the structural problem of patriarchy.

Gordon (1997) claims that Black masculinity is not only a cultural construction but is the adoption of white patriarchal masculinity mixed with a type of resistance to racial oppression. Through this definition, Gordon forces us to consider that Black masculinity is coded with society’s traditional ways of conceiving manhood, engrained with male centered ideals, and shaped by various forms of resistance implemented to confront White oppressors. This study, demonstrates that their enactment of manhood is not only informed by what they learn from their family and community. It also incorporates resistance to mestizos’ racial discrimination mainly through the implementation of the politics of patriarchal respectability.

Additionally, this study reveals that Black men’s maleness is also engrained with resistance to adopting and adapting new presentations of masculinities. To explain this form of resistance I draw from Lorde (1984) groundbreaking theorization on the “master’s tool will not dismantle the master’s house” (110). In my opinion, although scholars such

as bell, Johnson, Gordon and Heneri have demonstrated that men are all victims of patriarchy, I contend that Black men resist adopting new forms of masculinity because they are aware of the relative privilege that comes with being male. Despite the hardship they confront as being Black, they do not want to let go of the privilege of having women to their service. We also need to recognize that respectability and patriarchy are tools of master implemented to oppress others. Therefore, it is all structured to maintain white male in a position of power. This oppressive tool will not turn against its creator. It will not take a side against itself. Patriarchy may transmute into various patterns of performances. However, in principle, it remains the same: male-centered and male superiority.

Therefore, independently of Creole men's attempt to distinguish violent patriarchy from benevolent patriarchy, I assert that they are both oppressive. In all its forms women remain in an inferior position in relation to men. In benevolent patriarchy, women are subject to men's "benevolence or good will." In an antiblack multicultural context Black women, girls and children "navigate the fraught spaces between patriarchal relations within her own community (Black patriarchy) and Mestizo's patriarchy" (Goett, 2017), and indigenous patriarchy. While they all compete to obtain the power to subjugate the Other, I argue that Black women are trapped in an antiblack multicultural patriarchal web that emits power of domination simultaneously from multiple directions and in various patterns.

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